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THE KINGDOM OF THE LOVERS OF GOD

THE KINGDOM OF THE LOVERS OF GOD

BY

JAN RUYSBROECK
Prior of Grönendal, near Brussels

Now Translated for the first time from the Latin of Laurence Surius, the Carthusian, together with an Introduction by

T. ARNOLD HYDE

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INTRODUCTION.

INCOMPARABLY the greatest of all Christian mystics, Jan Ruysbroeck was born in the year 1293, at the village of Ruysbroeck, near Brussels. Ordained in due course to the priesthood, he exercised his sacred office at the Church of St. Gudule. At the age of sixty, in accordance with the advice of Lambert the Hermit, he betook himself to a life of silence and contemplation in the heart of the forest of Soignes, settling finally "in Valle Viridi," or Grönendal, where he founded a priory, the ruins of which are still existent. There he became Prior of the Canons Regular (or Hermits) of St. Augustine, a college of priests once greatly esteemed in England. Visited by Gerhard Groot, John Thauler and other notable persons of that period, his fame spread far and wide, and won for him the title of Admirabilis, whilst later times have conferred upon him the distinction of Doctor Ecstaticus. He died on the second day of December, 1381, having written twelve books, seven epistles, two hymns, and a prayer.

Several of the books have been translated from the Flemish into French by Maeterlinck and Ernest Hello. The present translation of "The Kingdom of the Lovers of God" is from the Latin of Laurence Surius, the Carthusian, in a complete edition printed at Cologne in 1672.

In 1891 appeared a remarkable essay by Maeterlinck, forming the introduction to his "L'Ornement des Noces Spirituelles de Ruysbroeck l'Admirable," and in 1894 a translation of the essay was published in English. To these publications the present Introduction is much indebted.

In the book "Regnum Deum Amantium" we have what is declared to be the most characteristic and deeply mystical of all these writings. It will be perceived how easily and quickly from subjects often obvious, sometimes quaint and even childish, he soars into regions of abstruse speculation, where we can no longer follow him. There "pinnacled dim in the intense inane," he discourses freely and easily of divine secrets, of the Absolute, of the Ultimate Reality, which is God Himself. He stands in line, it is true, with the great mystics of antiquity: Plato, Porphyry, Plotinus; with the few who, long ages apart, have

possessed the sublime gift of Intuition in full measure, but with this difference: that where they proceed with faltering steps, assisted also by the light of Reason, he by the light of pure Intuition, securely and boldly scales the ascent to the secret shrine of Illumination.

Few and far between are they who have succeeded in penetrating this rarely trodden sanctuary of the mind, but there is a dread experience, familiar to some, who, whether consciously or not, have ventured upon that lonely promontory, which, jutting forth from the uttermost verge of human thought, conducts to the light beyond. Sooner or later they have met with that which has been variously termed the Dweller on the Threshold, the Keeper of the Secret, the Wall, and the Destroyer, but the encounter has determined only in affrighted recoil from that contact: baffled, bewildered and half blinded, they have regained with difficulty the way back to peace and contentment of mind amid the familiar things of life.

The busy world of men does not realize that there is any experience of this nature, and appears unable even to entertain the idea that it exists, but there are those who

know it well and fear it exceedingly. It may visit them in the course of reading or of profound reflection, at moments of meditation or of prayer. They are well aware at ordinary times of its situation in the mind, so to speak, and strenuously endeavour to avoid entering into it. To have left the human pathway far behind; to have forfeited awhile the mental grasp of common things in the attempt to press forward to the Temple of Knowledge, and to stand alone before the great abyss, peering into the deeps of an infinite darkness and desolation, not yet having fared through to the light—this experience it is which seems to threaten at such times not only the foundations of the mind, but even life itself with instant dissolution.

Much more rarely still at far distant points in time does he appear, who, endowed with the gift of Intuition in a supreme degree, will dare to dispute the path with the Veiled One who lies in wait there, jealously guarding the Enigma of Infinity. Such a traveller has already entered, as the Patriarch Abraham did, into "an horror of great darkness," to endure without flinching the reverberations from the ceaseless lashes as of an exquisitely searching but invisible fire,

which assail the entire region of the mind. These serve, it may be, to warn from the Threshold the hesitant neophyte, to destroy the rash and unassoiled adventurer, and to purify with final lustration the adept before he flings open the Temple door, lifts the curtain and gazes upon the Light that never was on land or sea.

There are statements in the writings of Ruysbroeck which a strict theology might possibly qualify or amend. If to him it was a familiar experience to ascend the heights and breathe the rarefied air of contemplation, it must be admitted that it is quite another matter to record as readily his conceptions in the pale, inadequate symbols of language. The Apocalypse of St. John itself yields the inevitable impression that the written word is but a meagre vehicle in which to embody the splendours of the Eternal Word he contemplates. Failing inspiration, although Ruysbroeck advances with marvellous certitude amongst the visions of eternal things, it is scarcely a matter for wonder if sometimes he may trip in terms of human phraseology.

The translators from the Flemish tell us that the rendering of Surius is everywhere weak and timid compared with the original ;

that the Carthusian, apparently terrified by the heat and violence of the imagery there displayed, frequently tempers and subdues its force. Passing thus through a Latin medium in the version of Surius, it may also have lost something of what might be deemed "temerarious, rash and offensive to pious ears." Although Gerhard Groot and John Thauler remained Ruysbroeck's firm friends, yet there was one at least amongst his visitors who stoutly opposed his theology. To Gerson, and to all objectors, he addressed the Book of True Contemplation (in the Flemish, "The Twelve Beguines,") and especially the Book of Samuel, as his Apologia, submitting at the same time, both himself and his writings in all humility "to the judgment of the Church and of Catholic Doctors."

To-day there is an ever-widening and eager demand for mystical writings, and theosophical works generally, for with regard to theological questions of the deeper kind there are many who feel that human reason does not carry them far, and also that reason itself is a double-edged weapon capable indeed of being wielded on behalf of Faith, but also in the guise of rationalism, of being levelled against it. There remains

the divine faculty of Intuition, Θεωρία or Contemplation, a power of the soul which transcends Reason, beginning its operation hand in hand with Faith, where Reason ceases. It may be called a science, and an exact science, for throughout the ages its phenomena never vary. Its statements are indeed diversely coloured by the medium of personality through which it passes, but its conclusions remain ever the same, derived as they are from the rays of that light which enlightens all who come into the world. In the mind of the Catholic mystic we discern a plenitude of this original light and the philosophy of the Church dwelling at ease together. Scorned on the one hand as a warehouse of antiquated lumber and obsolete machinery, and derided on the other as a purveyor of useless wares and novelties, the Catholic Church pursues its way, conscious of divine mission to the souls of men, producing Saints and Seers, and bringing out of its rich treasury things new and old for the perfecting of the elect, and for the edifying of the body of Christ. It is a School of Grace where every class of minds may develop its genius. Beneath its ægis, St. Thomas Aquinas exercises his magnificent and profoundly subtle intellect in erecting

a synthesis of Christian philosophy, whilst at the extreme antipodes of consciousness, Richard Rolle of Hampole and Juliana of Norwich record their experiences in the same path as Jan Ruysbroeck, toward the light ineffable. Well did Aubrey de Vere speak of this aspect of the Church when he said that in it we have access to the sanctified reason of the human race.

Meanwhile we may read this translation of a pilgrimage in the Unseen, bequeathed to us from the Middle Ages, if only to regard with wistful reverence the certainty within himself of the things of which the great mystic speaks; more than this, we may be impressed with the conviction that a divine, intuitive faculty, transcending Reason, resides within the soul—a faculty whereby we can arrive at the certainty of God, Whom to see is to love, and Whom to know is Life Everlasting.

T. Arnold Hyde.

Feast of the Nativity of St. John Baptist, 1918.
Avonwick, South Devon.

THE KINGDOM OF THE LOVERS OF GOD

THE SUBJECT OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK.

The Lord hath led the just man through straight paths, and hath shown to him the Kingdom of God.

In these words a certain Wise Man teaches us five things :—

First, when he says "Lord" he points out to us the power of the Lord Himself, as one who has dominion over all creatures.

Secondly, when he says "Hath led" that is, "Led back," he signifies the fall and wandering, or rather going astray of man, and the sympathy, pity and ruth of God, in that He restores man from his fall into original sin, and leads him back from his wandering to the way, and from death to life.

Thirdly, when he says, "the just man," he is showing the love, the regard and the

mercy of God, Who out of true charity and devotion that He might make us just, of His own accord suffered death.

Fourthly, when he adds, "through straight paths" he is intimating the boundless wisdom and generosity of God, as indeed in many ways He has shown, by those very gifts which urge man towards virtue, what those straight paths are.

And then *Fifthly,* when he adds further "And hath showed him the Kingdom of God," he shows us the fruit and the usefulness, and also the cause of all these works of God, that is to say, how man may contemplate the Kingdom of God, that is, God Himself, and may enjoy it most happily for all eternity.

CHAPTER I.

In What Way the Name of the Lord Applies Rightly to God, and of the Creation of all Things.

When we are beginning to speak of the Lord, which is the first matter, rightly so is God called: since it is He Who is the Beginning, the Origin, the Life and Keeper of all creatures. For four things belong to the Lord:—Power, Wisdom, Bounty or Affection and Justice. God is that very Power to which all things yield; also that boundless Wisdom to which there is nothing that is not manifest, clear and open; also that Affection or Generosity which bestows all things; and finally that Justice which grants rewards and also avenges all things. Furthermore, in order that He might manifest His own Power, Wisdom and Goodness, He formed Heaven and Earth. Heaven He adorned with Himself

and the angelic spirits, and Earth with men, and a manifold variety of creatures. Therefore by creating them He shows His Power: by placing and arranging them, His Wisdom: and His Goodness and Bounty by pouring them forth through numberless gifts and blessings. Angelic nature—that is, those lofty and intellectual spirits He formed, so as to bestow upon them the power and grace of turning themselves to Him with humility, with reverence, with praise, with love, and finally with a worthy veneration; so that being thus disposed by this means, that very power might possess the Kingdom of eternal changelessness, the Intellect might be enlightened and transformed by boundless wisdom, and that Love might reach forth and arrive unwearied at God, Who converts the will freely so far as they are concerned: and finally that the unity of all powers might sink and be engulfed in eternal and illimitable enjoyment. Whosoever they are who turn themselves to God rejoice in eternal bliss, seeing that individual powers have their conversion in the light of glory, and their

own enjoyment in the unity of Divinity, and also receive essential clearness. But those who turn themselves away—thrown back upon themselves in satisfaction with their own innate and natural greatness—are all of them unhappy persons, since that faculty of theirs, rendered so weak and powerless, and distracted by so many matters, is so far deprived and devoid of all grace that they can never turn themselves to God; the intellect is beclouded and stained by the shadows of vices which shut it out from the Divine clearness, and the will finally is filled with bitterness and the pain of eternal condemnation. For all have fallen from the highest place to the lowest, and are the enemies of God, of the angels and of holy men.

Furthermore God created human nature and adorned it with grace, that it might occupy that place, and might gain humility, obedience, service, praise, love and veneration, which wicked spirits have lost by the contrary vices. In these ways first it is explained how He is called Lord. The Power of Him of Whom we have spoken

is evident from this, that He has created all things out of nothing: His Wisdom, in that He has ordered all things in Heaven and earth: His Goodness and Bounty, in that He has beautified heaven, earth, angels and men with many kinds of gifts: and finally His Justice, in that He has assigned to the good that they should enjoy Him in eternal delights and the place of reward, and has condemned the wicked to punishment which will never have an end.

CHAPTER II.

How Christ has led us back to Happiness; also Concerning the Seven Sacraments.

The second point is where he says "hath led" or "led back". No one indeed has need to be led back, nor is wont to be led back unless he has gone astray. For the human nature of our first parents fell by their own fault, and that which was formerly free, by sin became a prison and captivity, and exile and a path of birds, a straying away or wandering, to all those who are born in it. Since they are all the sons of disobedience, yet Christ, in assuming our nature led man back again. For in it He lived humbly, obediently, and dutifully, serving God the Father and men, to whom He also showed Himself faithful in teaching, in giving an example, and showing Himself kindhearted. Besides this He applied

Himself to acts of charity, He suffered most patiently and meekly, and died for love, paid our debt with justice, and finally brought our nature into liberty. Therefore that very nature was restored to liberty, and as many as in Christ are regenerate are all free. But for him who wishes to be regenerate in Christ and to be endowed with liberty it is necessary that he have faith, and first that he receive the Sacrament of Baptism, which is the sign of spiritual cleansing, and so to speak the pathway on or rather the reclothing of the new life in Christian union. He must renounce also the devil and his service, and give his faith to Christ, and thus will the vesture of innocence be restored to him, that is, his soul will be clad in the death and merits of Christ.

And he is bound to promise that he will bring this vesture of innocence unstained to Christ's tribunal. Four things follow from this. The first is that he is set free from eternal punishment. The second is that he is made worthy of eternal joys. The third is that he is infused with divine grace, relying on which in each separate

hour he is able to progress in new virtues. The fourth is that he is made a participator of all good deeds that ever were or will be done. And that he may the better discharge this promise of his, and increase the grace of God within him, he must receive another Sacrament, which is called Confirmation; and he will long to bear his Lord's cross, and that, too, against his own flesh, the world and Satan. Here moreover, three kinds of gifts are bestowed on him. First, divine grace is increased in him. Secondly, the ancient enemy is disabled and weakened, and the more shrinks from and fears man. Thirdly, he is strengthened in all virtues. In this way doubtless in Baptism he is regenerated and adorned, but in Confirmation he is strengthened. Frequently however it is wont to come about that through pride of soul and lust of the mind and pleasure of the body, he falls into his besetting sins, and violater of his own promise, he befouls his own mind, loses the grace of God, and holds in contempt the death and the freedom of Christ. But because he is changeable, the most kind

God, Who first of all created him, and then when he was lost, renewed him by His own death, and unwilling to lose him, left a third Sacrament in the Catholic Church, that is, that of Penance. For this, on man's part four things are required which must be done, God impelling him, or rather by the movement of God. The first is true sorrow, by which each man grieves heartily that ever he has sinned. The second is a sound desire of never sinning again henceforth. The third is a perfect desire of offering satisfaction to holy Church by confessing and doing penance according to a priest's counsel. The fourth is a fervent longing for serving God in humble obedience continually that He will bestow upon him eternal happiness, and that he may confess his sins with great bitterness. These are the four necessary dispositions: whosoever possesses these not only obtains pardon of his sins, but also a greater grace than he had before, and becomes a sharer in all the Church's good works, and because he is returning from exile to his fatherland, from strangers to his friends and kinsmen, from want to

wealth, from death to life, and finally from mourning to joy, Christ instituted the fourth Sacrament in place of a special banquet, that is of His own Body and Blood, that it may be to us for Food and Drink, in which we are inseparably united. Let him receive the Sacrament worthily, with humble reverence and veneration, for he receives the Creator of himself and all things. And in the same way let him receive Him with an inward and eager disposition of his own, being assured that he is receiving Him Who out of a most faithful love for his sake endured death, and that He should give Himself to him in a blissful eternity. Then the Fifth Sacrament is Order, which applies and attaches a man already disjoined and detached from worldly pleasures and occupations to God if, that is, he undertakes these duties with justice. It confers a discrimination of powers, and adorns him, and places him in a certain distinct dignity and excellence. The Sixth Sacrament is Matrimony, so that those who persevere in the world may live according to law, and may bestow a mutual trust in each other to

be inviolably kept till death. And the Seventh and last Sacrament is Extreme Unction, which should be received with desire when anyone thinks himself about to die, and in order that mortal and venial sins may be banished to forgetfulness, his sins are forgiven him through this Sacrament and the prayers of the priests of the church. These are the Seven Sacraments which restore man from the eternal death of original sin and of his own deadly and venial sins, and dispose and attach him to God, and finally bestow on him in time a life in accordance with law. And according to this it arises from five principal points, namely, that God has led back man to Himself by His own death and the Seven Sacraments.

CHAPTER III.

What Things make a Man Just both in the Active and in the Contemplative Life.

Furthermore the third point is that in which he says "Just," for no one is led back unless he has been made just or justified; since to justify or to make just, is to lead back. There are however, four things in which each one may notice for himself whether he is just, and has been led back by Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Sacraments. The first is, if he trust God in all necessities both for time and eternity, and he himself present himself as faithful to God in all things which he possesses. Secondly, if in will and deed he exercise love and goodwill in all the bodily as well as spiritual needs of men. Thirdly, if he constantly maintain wisdom and gentleness in all circumstances, whether they come

to him from God, or from creatures. Fourthly, if he be of lofty and upright mind, freed and disengaged from all creatures; also in established love, and glad and joyful expectation, together with sure and certain hope of eternal life. These four things render a man just in the active life.

But beyond these there are four other things which render a man just in the contemplative life. The first is a free spirit, attracting itself through love, and with longing or affection raised and uplifted into the unity of God. The second is an intellect enlightened by grace, when considering with admiration the abundance of the Most Holy Trinity, and without astonishment contemplating with attentive gaze, is transformed by the boundless clearness, and uplifted in the light of unity. The third is a delight, yielding propension or inclination, and a liquefying or outflowing adhesion of all powers, and greater riches than those powers themselves are able to lay hold of, and joys which embrace and penetrate and inundate them.

The fourth is an outflowing losing of oneself in the abyss of this object; for no one

can walk in darkness, and we lose ourselves in that eternal object which is the highest and chief blessedness. These eight things now spoken of render a man just both in the active and the contemplative life. Thus therefore the Lord hath led back the just man.

CHAPTER IV.

What the Ways of the Kingdom of God are. And first of the Sensible Way.

The fourth point is, "Through straight paths." Now let the reader perceive that the Lord has led back the just man by straight paths. The ways by which the Kingdom of God are arrived at are threefold. The first way is bodily and sensible. The second is merely natural. The third is supernatural and divine. The first, I say, is the external, sensible way, to which belong four elements, and three heavens, each one of which the Lord has adorned as it befits it. And this is the last sensible kingdom and trace, and as it were, palpable similitude of God. For these things were created and adorned for the necessary uses of men, so that these things, having been seen and considered, concerning all and with all, he may be faith-

ful and serve his God and praise Him together with them.

The lowest Element of Earth God made, and adorned with numerous fruitbearing herbs and trees of diverse kinds for the needs and use of men, and in the same way with various and many kinds of animals which should serve man, and over all of which he himself rules. The second element of the Waters He made, flowing about and penetrating the land in different ways, and even bringing to it a kind of beauty; and He adorned them with many kinds of fishes, and diverse beings which should be for food for man; and finally He prepared this element by many modes of purifications for the necessity of men.

He created also the third element of Air, which is an ornament both to Earth and Waters, so that it should be lustrous and clear with the light of heaven. For not without corporeal light can any exterior colour or species be discerned by the senses or distinctly recognised. To this element a manifold variety of birds affords no mean ornament.

Finally He made the fourth element of

Fire, which upon the other three inferior elements bestows their fecundity; since without Fire nothing either in the Earth or in the Waters or in the Air can either increase, or pursue its life, or preserve that life when it has it. These are the four elements of which all earthly things are compounded. But besides these God made the lowest Heaven, that is the Firmament, by which at the same time all the elements are beautified, since by its impulse all inferior creatures are moved, live and grow. Moreover He adorned it with the manifold brightness, excellence and grandeur of wandering stars, and the stars which rule over nature; the highest part of it is poured forth and shines in the supreme clearness of the sky.

He made also the Middle Heaven, which is called Pellucid or Crystalline, not that it is a crystal, but on account of its clearness. This Heaven together with the splendour of the Highest Heaven, is an ornament to the Firmament, and is adorned with brightness; the highest part of it is called First Moveable, since it is the source and beginning of every movement both of the heavens and

of the elements. To this First Moveable the planets, the courses of the sky, and all the elements are annexed, and all corporeal nature works in accordance with its influence. But no created thing without reason can rule over a rational creature, nor can the First Moveable itself, since that has the power of controlling for itself the course of the sky and all nature, and of existing above the whole movement of nature, as far as it is contrary to its own virtue. Finally He created the Highest Heaven, which is a kind of pure and simple brightness, absolutely immoveable, the source, beginning and basis of all corporeal things and which embraces in its spherical or circular revolution all heavens and all elements, and is higher, wider, greater, and more profound than all other corporeal things ever made by God. This Heaven God has adorned for Himself, for angelic spirits and holy men; for the corporeal, created clearness is dependent on the spiritual uncreated brightness, which is the Most High Nature of God. Moreover these corporeal things are this Heaven itself, together with all things which it embraces

in its own circuit beneath itself. And this is the external, sensible Kingdom of God, which each one whatsoever in his own degree and endowment ought to consider and contemplate, for which to praise God and devote to Him his due service. These things which are situated below the Firmament, can be seen by the eyes, or perceived by the outward senses; but the things above the Firmament may be imagined by the inward senses, or examined by reasonable consideration. But where the corporeal heavens determine, there even imagination and all the senses, both internal as well as external, fail likewise; for where that which which is corporeal has its boundary, there also every sense determines; for there is no sense at all which can comprehend God nor angel, nor the soul, because they have neither appearance nor shape. So far let it suffice to have spoken of the first or sensible way.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Way of Natural Light.

The second Way is that of Natural Light, in which all advance who perform and carry out natural virtues with an intention alien from the impulse or intuition of the Holy Spirit. This way enters into the whole man, through the lower powers adorned with the natural and moral virtues and through the higher powers uplifted in rest to the simple foundation of the essence of the soul, which bears the image of God, and is the natural Kingdom of God. Man himself was created with regard to his body, out of the four elements, and with regard to his soul, out of nothing in the image of God. His first natural power is called Irascible, the function of which is to hold and subdue under a curb whatever is contrary to good manners, all the bestiality of nature, and evil inclinations, and to dominate them all.

Moreover he should be adorned with the first cardinal virtue, which is called Prudence; by which he will carefully consider whence he has come, where he is, and whither he is going; also the shortness of life, the instability of time, the evils of the world, and the length of the future life, and that perpetuity will last for ever. He will examine and approve also the fittingness and greatness of the virtues adorning the outer and the inner man. The second natural power is the Concupiscible, which another cardinal virtue should adorn, namely Temperance, which may check and restrain concupiscence, and shun all immoderate excess in eating and drinking, so that he may never seek anything at all superfluous, or what may be unnecessary for man; and that he may not desire too hungrily or greedily the things that are necessary. The third natural power is the Rational. The former two powers are bestial if they are not adorned with virtues, but this natural power distinguishes man from the brutes. He will adorn it therefore with Justice, that man may give and take, do, and leave undone,

control, rule and dispose or order all things in accordance with the dictate of right reason or discretion. The fourth natural power of man is Freedom of Will, which should be adorned with its natural virtue, which is Moral Courage, so that man may be able to command and impose a curb upon all bestial powers of the mind, and with this courage of mind may be able to bear with a certain calmness of mind, loss and shame, the humiliation or the exaltation of himself, gain and loss, prosperity and adversity, or joys and sorrows, and whatever may happen to him from all kinds of created things. In the same way with the strength gained and the powers received, he may be able to exercise these virtues, nor fail anywhere.

These are the four natural virtues, which the same number of cardinal or moral virtues rule, and the virtues order and control these things which adorn the outer man in his moral life. And this is the lowest part of the way of Natural Light, but three higher powers of the soul are the highest part of that same natural way, set apart and averse from occupations or multiplicity, and turned

towards rest in unity. From these memory uplifted, and turned within into the nakedness of its own essence, is divested of action in that single essence. And there is in it a certain natural inclination and desire reaching towards the simple principle of the mind : it turns itself downward towards external actions, and that together with the rational power of intelligence and freedom of will, and rules, controls and orders all its senses and bodily powers. In the same way it betakes itself from occupations and multiplicity to the bare essence of the soul by a certain natural inclination within to its source and its own natural quiet, and there it is opposite to the bare essence of the mind, and that very essence bestows upon it a kind of natural beauty and ornament. The second Power is the Intellect, which turned upon its own essence, and looking towards the rest of its principle, is of its own nature divested of action, and reposes in non-action, and is embraced on all sides by the simplicity of its own essence ; thus it easily perceives and comprehends in itself as in all other creatures, that it is a certain cause from

which all created things depend and flow forth; and in this it strives to repose for ever, and it draws and assumes from created things the power, wisdom, goodness and riches of the First Cause, so that all things which It powerfully created, It disposed and ordered wisely, and from Its immense goodness and munificence most lavishly and multifariously beautified and endowed it; nevertheless, so that whatever It bestowed by Its manifold reason on creatures, It continued henceforth boundless in it, in the exhaustless opulence of Its most lofty nature. The third Power is Will, which embraces Memory and Intellect, and thus they naturally tend within to their own origin. For when no temporary matters, and no bodily delights detain or engage the highest powers from being drawn up into unity, thence a certain sensible quietude arises and springs up, pervading body and soul: and then these powers are penetrated and transformed into the unity of the mind and unity into them. Further the most excellent part of the natural way is the essence of the mind, which depends on God, and is immoveable

and loftier than the highest heaven and deeper than the bottom of the sea and broader and wider at the same time than all the world together with all the elements; thus does spiritual nature excel all corporeal nature. For it is itself the natural kingdom of God, and the boundary of all the actions of the soul. For no creature can act of itself beyond God alone, since He is the Essence of all Essence, Life of all Life, and the Principle and Preservation of all creatures. That then is the way of Natural Light, in which one is able to proceed by natural powers, and the repose of the spirit, and for this very reason it is called the Natural Way, because it can be held and travelled on apart from the impulse or intuition of the Holy Spirit and without divine or supernatural gifts; although apart from the grace of God it is rarely so excellently completed and perfected.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Supernatural and Divine Way.

The third way is Supernatural and Divine, where the soul is moved by the Holy Spirit, Who is Divine Charity, moving man in a sevenfold manner, which consists of seven gifts as they are mentioned by Isaias, which are indeed as it were the seven principal virtues, the roots and beginnings of all virtues. And the Spirit of God Himself is as a living fountain with seven gushing jets, which make seven life-giving rivulets, welling and upspringing in the same fount, and flowing through every kingdom of the soul, and rendering it fertile in many ways. For the Spirit of God Himself is boundless Piety, Brightness and Ardour or Fire, as kindling these seven gifts, and causing them to burn and flame in the pure mind of the soul like seven lamps before the throne of the

Most High Majesty. Besides the Holy Spirit Himself, the Divine Charity, the Eternal and most clear Sun, gives forth seven lucent and splendid rays, warming, enlightening and sanctifying the kingdom of the soul. These same seven gifts are like seven planets, situated in a pure mind as in the firmament, controlling, ordering and governing the Kingdom of the Soul in divine charity. In the same way they are compared to the seven locks which adorned the head of most mighty Samson (—that is of a loving soul)—which signifies a Free Will, whilst they fill it with divine grace, and edify and fortify it with courage and wisdom against every kind of vices : which gifts therefore the infernal enemy desires to steal away. Finally these seven gifts are seven modes of the activities of the Holy Spirit in the soul with which He adorns, composes, orders, and renders like Himself, and then perfects and brings forth to eternal fruition.

CHAPTER VII.

Of six Kinds of Men who do not apply themselves to receiving the Gifts of the Holy Spirit: and especially of the First Kind.

There are six kinds of men who do not accommodate themselves according to their powers, as natural decency demands, to the perception of those supernatural and divine gifts. There are men of the first kind who live in open mortal sin, and having forsaken God, turn themselves to the pleasures and delights of the body, to arrogance and pride of mind, to the desiring and amassing of earthly things and riches contrary to the command and the honour of God. But there is a threefold kind of those who spend a life subject to open mortal sins. The first kind is of those who seek and run after honours, dignities, high degrees and certain privileges beyond others on earth, and envy

others and try to crush them. The second kind is of those who suffer from the disease of avarice or greed, and who usurp and claim for their own private use those things which God made for all men in common, and if they are able they desire to possess them alone. And these indeed do God no small wrong, when they do not serve Him for these powers of theirs, and they even do harm to themselves when they render their whole life unquiet for themselves and full of business; finally also to their neighbours they are harmful, when they do not benevolently share with them that which has been divinely created for the use of both. Then there is the third kind of those whom slothfulness and petulance, and in the same way gluttony and extravagance hold entangled, who after the manner of beasts follow after their pleasures, and so are stupid and barbarous and least illumined with Divine Light. These three things clearly indicate this to all who have their eyes opened, that all those who form a habit in these matters, and persist in them, are far removed from divine charity, and are most of all like aliens. The

Ethnics indeed, or those Gentiles who obey not natural law nor right reason, but follow their own bestial powers and give way to the affections of their nature and their pleasure, will receive greater punishment, and are greater strangers to God, and differ from Him with a greater difference than other Ethnics, who lead their life in accordance with the dictate of natural reason. The Jews also, on whom the decalogue was laid, prophecy bestowed, and many other marvels and immense gifts conferred, and who followed the examples of their Fathers who preceded them by sight or by hearing, both account as nothing all these things, and lead a bestial life and one contrary to their own law, are certainly in far worse case than the Ethnics and the rest of the Jews who obey the divine law; but yet men of the Christian religion, for whose sake Christ died, and whom He redeemed by His death, to whom He left His Sacraments and manifold gifts, and even promised that they should enjoy Him for ever, and those who in Baptism promised faith or fidelity, innocence and constant service, yet never-

theless are turned away from Him, and serve the world, the devil and their own bestial pleasures,—these indeed exceed in wickedness both Pagans and Jews, when they have divinely followed many things, and have bound themselves to greater matters, yet nevertheless esteem them all as naught. But if they are willing to regain wisdom and to be converted, they return more readily into the grace of God, because they indeed are His sons, whilst the others are strangers and aliens. And this is the first kind of evil men, of those most unlike God, and farthest away from God.

CHAPTER VIII

Of the Second Kind of Evil Men.

The second kind are faithless or dishonest persons who hold and pursue some error against the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed, or against the Seven Sacraments of the Church or who differ in some respect from the Catholic Church, or hold an opinion contrary to it, or maintain it publicly or privately: if they determine to persist thus tenaciously, and so die in it, even though endowed with all the moral virtues, and engaged in all acts of pity and compassion, and are esteemed for as great a clearness of intellect as any mortal who has ever lived, nevertheless they are to be plunged into the flames of hell.

Moreover there are four things which are wont to lead men into heresy or straying from the faith. The first thing is self-will and obstinacy, when one desires to follow the

advice or instruction of no one. The second is complacency in himself for his own natural knowledge, skill and cleverness, or else in any one singular external mode of living beyond other men. The third is credulity, by which a man yields his faith too readily to any impression or passing thought, without first weighing diligently and exactly whether it agrees with the Holy Catholic Church, or dissents from it. The fourth is spiritual pride, in which a man entrusts more to his own judgment than to the Holy Church. These things indeed drive a man headlong into error or heresy, infected with which he is straightway unworthy of the grace of God. But if they wish to be converted from these things they must renounce their own will, their own knowledge and intellect, and submit and bow before the knowledge and the instruction of the Catholic Church, and to pass and end their external and internal life without pride or uplifting to the honour of God; and they must believe internally without pretence that which the Holy Catholic Church believes. Moreover each one according to his own

state must outwardly cherish and exercise both the precepts and decrees of the Church which the Holy Church cherishes and exercises—thus only will they be able to obtain grace and afterwards happiness. The Ethnics, although they in a way cherish and follow after natural justice, none the less are damned, because through almost all the regions of the world the name of Jesus Christ has been published abroad, and His deeds, discourses, and the prophesied freedom of human nature has been announced and propagated. And in the same way too, the Jews even though in these times they may be living according to the precepts of God, the manner of life of the primitive fathers and their custom and instruction, none the less also are to be punished with the sentence of damnation, and that a more grievous one than the Ethnics, because they despise the prophecies of the law which was handed down by them, which speak of the Advent and the Passion of Christ: they despise too, of true and certain malice the visitation, the doctrine, the deeds or works of Christ: whence I doubt not,

that the Jews are in worse case than the Ethnics, as those who are enriched and endowed with the greater benefits of God, yet nevertheless desire not to recognise them.

CHAPTER IX

Of the Third Kind of Evil Men.

Of the third kind there are false men and hypocrites who do good works simply for temporal gain. This kind of feigned men is divided into four. The first are those who feign with regard to themselves, and who fawn upon their superiors, and bear before themselves their good works externally and their righteousness, and all the moral virtues, whereby they are elevated above others in honour, advantages, riches or privileges: so that perhaps they may be advanced to the supreme pontificate, or the episcopate, or some degree of dignity: or if they be Religious, of whatever rank they may be, so that they may obtain the duties of Abbot, Prior or Abbess; or if they be laymen, that they may be possessed of secular power; and thus feign themselves and thrust their flattery on others and fawn

on them, and show and manifest themselves humble and upright, and thoroughly grounded in all the virtues. All these things issue either from pride or from greed. And this is Pretence. And because men of this kind are hypocrites and pretenders, whatever good works they perform in this mind or with this intention are all to be considered as lost. Others feign themselves and accomplish great achievements so that they are held in repute as Saints, either on account of some temporary or earthly gain. The greatest number of men is of this kind. Whosoever do their good works openly, in order that they may receive the praises of men, are false, and actions of that kind merit no reward of God. If a priest celebrate the sacrifice of the Mass with the intention, most of all that he may reap temporal gain, or that he may appear good, he is a hypocrite, to be smitten with eternal death. A monk, a solitary, a professor of any religious institution whatever, a Begard, a sister, a Beguine, or whatever they are called, if they bestow pains on external good works, that is if they fast or watch,

if they pray or wander over the earth as pilgrims, whether they go about unclothed or harangue assemblies, or maintain a poor bodily condition or are given up to much silence, if they dwell in desert places as solitaries, if they adopt those unusual and unaccustomed modes of living, and the more that they may encourage belief in their holiness, or receive profit from something temporary, are obviously feigned persons and hypocrites. The third are those who manifest certain good works, in order that they may please their own will in the dealing out of food and drink, and may be able to live an easy, pleasant and refined life. Sometimes such persons are extremely sharp and clever. They esteem not greatly worldly honours, and they desire no worldly goods, but are fastidious and dainty, and thus flatter and fawn upon those from whom they hope that they may gain anything grateful to the stomach. The fourth are those who in secret design evil or in secret spend a wicked life, yet nevertheless outwardly feign themselves otherwise and adorn themselves with cer-

tain external virtues, whereby they may be able to cover up their malice and wickedness and be the more freely at liberty for it. Therefore all those whom we have mentioned are false persons and hypocrites, and unworthy of divine grace. Nevertheless if they are willing to be converted, and to be rendered worthy of divine love, they shall retain all their good works, which were done either on account of some temporal honour or riches, or in order that they might be preferred to others, or that they might appear holy, or for some earthly advantage of certain external things or other, or that they might please someone, or cover up their own perversity,—all those good works I say, they will retain but will change the corrupt and vicious intention, so as to regard in all their actions the praise and honour of God and their own eternal happiness, and to despise and trample upon all temporal things: thus will they be able to obtain divine charity and eternal life.

CHAPTER X.

Of the Fourth Kind of Evil Men.

Of the fourth kind are perverse men, crafty and evilly cautious or wrongly clever, who strive to possess earth and merit heaven. To these men four things act as an impediment whereby they may not gain the grace of God. The first is duplicity of intention with which they desire to serve God and the world at the same time; for they may fast, and keep festal days, visit churches, be present at holy convocations, and seem to keep God's commandments in many ways; and in their own judgment they do enough for God. Moreover these also are unrighteous in two ways, and so in another way they are disturbed with many cares within, and keenly and subtilly think upon and examine into many things with themselves; but outwardly they spend much work and labour, and rely upon various methods to heap up

earthly riches and powers. And in this way they struggle to possess heaven equally with earth, and time with eternity.

Under such signs every kind of man fights, ecclesiastics equally with seculars. Monks also desire to be considered holy religious, and meanwhile none the less to have and to heap together whatever they please of their own, or of property. Canons and secular priests wish to hold at the same time two or three ecclesiastical benefices; perhaps even they give attention to business, and gain for themselves as great returns as they can. Laymen and plebeians and mechanics, and in the same way women, whom they term Beguts or Beguines, in whatever state they are living, if they strive and struggle for temporal goods, beyond that which necessity demands, together with God, are double-minded, and unlike God and unworthy of divine grace.

The second impediment is niggardliness or miserliness; for in many things they serve God, but in sympathy to their neighbours, in deeds of charity and benevolence, or of pity and generosity, they do not serve Him.

They always seem to suffer that defect in themselves, nor can they be parted from their own effects, so as to disperse them amongst the poor; yet their own conscience accuses them with regard to all sins and vices, with the exception of niggardliness and miserliness. For their conscience is formed not upon justice, but their own individual will, nor are they touched or moved with divine love. The third is natural knowledge or acuteness, or subtilty, whereby they see in prospect their own gain or loss, and provide beforehand; and with whomsoever they have business dealings, whether wealthy or poor, they always seek their own profit, and that openly as in private. Because of this excessive niggardliness and avariciousness they are hated and disliked by everyone. And because they flourish by their natural foresight, when they suspect that death is at their gate, they freely give their possessions that they may purchase eternal beatitude; for if they knew they were going to live they would never bestow any benefit on others. The fourth is a certain stony hardness of heart: for whatever speeches they

hear, whatever good is told them and however great good examples may appear, whether they are chastised with some ill health or other from God, or loss of temporal possessions, they ever persevere in their inveterate, evil habit. These men indeed are astutely or wickedly prudent, since they deserve little or nothing of divine gifts. But if they desire to be rendered worthy of divine charity, in order that they may behold God with their whole heart, they must despise for the love of God all earthly things beyond those which are necessary for sustaining life, and must share and divide with the poor what possessions they have, and seek diligently and seriously the Kingdom of God, and finally they must order and appoint their whole life with true charity and discretion ; and thus also they will be able to obtain grace for the present, and eternal life in the future.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the Fifth Kind of Evil Men.

Of the fifth kind are slaves or men of a servile condition. Moreover there are four things which render men slaves, devoid of liberty, base and unworthy of divine grace. The first is that they regard themselves and their personal profit, and shun their own discomfort or loss : that is, they desire to escape the flames of hell, and to enjoy heavenly delights, and for the sake of these things they do or they omit to do all these things. Such men readily perform great works, the more that they have themselves as an end in everything. The second is that they are being held back through the fear of losing or the hope of gain ; and indeed certain of such men shrink from no earthly matters whatever, that they may attain eternal things. The third is that they esteem their

own works and their own condition, and rely on and confide in their own deeds rather than in that liberty in respect of which they are the heirs of God, and redeemed by the Blood of Christ. The fourth is that they render themselves hired servants; for unless they hope to obtain their reward from God in no wise would they be serving Him; and they are more afraid of being stricken with the sentence of eternal damnation than of offending God, and they strive after the kingdom of God itself and their own happiness in it, rather than to bestow endless praise on God and to remain for ever His free servants. Therefore such men are without knowledge of liberty, nor are they touched by divine love, since they regard themselves in everything. But charity strives after and seeks the honour of God, and renders a man forgetful of himself, and self-denying, and also hopeful and trustful most of all in God, and brings about in him the desire of serving God continually in true charity both in the life temporal as in the life eternal, and the intention of yielding to God Himself His

own Kingdom and that he himself is to enjoy it for ever.

In this understanding, such servants ought to yield and convert their intention to God by a certain liberty of this kind, since by this very action they are about to become capable of divine grace, to reap their own deeds and attain to eternal life.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the Sixth Kind of Evil Men.

Of the sixth kind there are the naturally proud, and the subtle and clear-sighted by knowledge either natural or acquired, frequently refined in life and outward manners, in natural contemplation lofty and easy, and ever devoted to their own will. These are consistent and upright in mind from pride, and in a distinguished mode of life always imagine themselves to excel, and attempt to do so: and because of this spiritual life of theirs they desire to receive everyone's honour and respect; and indeed they find very few to give them enough satisfaction or to soothe their disposition; for it is impossible to please them sufficiently unless one thinks highly of them. Whatever is being stated and explained either concerning the inner or the outer life of any other

persons whatsoever, that they always belittle, but their own life they esteem highly. They desire to instruct all others, and think that they have gained all wisdom, nor do they endure to be trained or rebuked by anyone, for they are proud and self-willed. But by the sharpness of their natural intelligence all things tend to strengthen their knowledge, and they rebut all reasonings and whatever opposes them; and this natural knowledge is itself an occasion and an assistance to their pride. And whosoever are not illumined by divine light, nor grounded in true humility, on account of their acuteness, and their externally refined manners, think highly of themselves with respect to their readiness of natural contemplation. But inasmuch as they are not moved nor aroused by divine grace, frequently in any necessity they fail towards those who are by circumstances their neighbours.

For charity never fails our neighbours, but their nature is unequal, because in contemplation it regards itself and they are readier to engage in their own contem-

plation than in any work of charity—whereby evidently they are deceived and wrong. For the works of charity are of precept; and contemplation, supernatural though it be, apart from deeds of charity is of necessity harmful. Moreover whatever they possess or obtain they think is a necessity to them; for they believe that both in their outer and inner life they are extremely susceptible. Natural intellect flourishes strongly in them, and is exceedingly exalted; and they receive no uncommon pleasure from this knowledge of theirs and from their spiritual life. Finally there are few of this character on earth, but however many there are, they are unworthy of divine grace; whereby nevertheless if they desire to become worthy, they must look to the praise and honour of God, with a humble heart in all their actions and in their whole life; they will gain knowledge of themselves and least of all uplift themselves in heart, and will strive to make other men equally adorned and refined with virtues as they are themselves—not less but rather more than themselves. And they will retain and

hold that clearness of intellect with which they are endowed, together with humility, and thus will be illumined with divine light : indeed by means of holy leisure, and the casting away of those occupations which are associated with things of earth, they will lay hold of the contemplative life. They will hold fast too, the refined manners of the natural virtues towards God and their neighbours, and will keep them in true charity, devotion, kindness and generosity, and thence they will gain too the active life. Therefore whosoever are now included in the before mentioned kinds of men, are all living outside the grace of God, and are subjected to mortal sins ; nor can they be saved unless they are converted by that one only way which has been stated.

CHAPTER XIII

Concerning the Three Theological Virtues.

Now Divine Faith is the beginning of every grace, of all gifts, and of all divine virtues, since it is a certain supernatural light and the foundation of all good. Those who wish to obtain it and to be enrolled in the number of the sons of the eternal kingdom must urge on their nature towards that point in which it can especially excel, so that they should seek and consider how God has created Heaven and earth out of love for the sake of man, and has endowed man himself with various gifts both of spirit and of body; and for man's sake has even suffered death itself, and wishes to give pardon freely for all his sins, if only he refuse not to do penance: how He is ready freely to infuse into him divine charity and all the virtues, and to

bestow Himself wholly, and all that He possesses upon him, in order that he may enjoy eternal glory for ever ; only He desires that he may consider this very thing within himself, and that of his own free will he may serve Him from true obedience. And because God has done all things with the freest goodness, affection and generosity ; and His nature is to flow forth perpetually in time and eternity, together with all His gifts, and to uplift all those on whom He bestows His gifts to Himself and to lead them to eternal enjoyment : rightly then should a man perform all his works out of generosity or free will to God's honour, together with a true humility and obedience, nor to seek or desire or demand aught in return for them, save what God wishes to bestow. Since he who is most generous, most affectionate and beneficent, whatever the payment of his service is to be, will not remain unrewarded, nor will he pass away into forgetfulness. Now in this manner nature is led up into its own supreme height ; whenever it fails, and can proceed no farther, God approaches it with supernatural light,

and so illumines the intelligence, that a man may conceive greater faith and trustfulness than can be described. Therefore let him consider and look upon that undying good for which he waits, and without any doubtfulness or hesitancy let him look to obtain that in which he trusts and hopes. For from thence a certain sensible charity issues which conjoins and unites him in freedom together with God. and these are the three Theological Virtues, to wit, Faith, Hope and Charity. Together with these the Holy Spirit at the same time descends upon the man's soul, as a living fountain, issuing forth in seven rivulets, which are the seven divine gifts, with which the soul is adorned, settled, ordered and perfected, and led to eternal life.

CHAPTER XIV.

Concerning the Gift of the Fear of the Lord, and certain Virtues springing therefrom.

Now the first gift of these seven is the loving or affective Fear of the Lord, which rather fears to offend God than to lose the reward, and operates in a man so as reverently to worship God and His glorious Humanity, and strongly to desire to refer and shape his whole life and all his actions to the honour of Christ; to worship with great reverence all the Sacraments of the Church, the teaching and instructions of Christ, all His Saints and the service of God; and to show reverence to his own Superiors whether secular or spiritual with hearty goodwill, and finally to worship all good men in whom he recognises the virtues of the likeness of God. For true humility springs out of this loving Fear, and least of all from a feigned casting

of himself into the depths, whilst such a one ponders and regards the greatness of God and his own littleness, God's wisdom and his own ignorance, the riches of God and His generosity, and his own poverty and need. This humility always leads a man to think little of himself, and to abase himself before God, and in the same manner to lower himself by no means only below his superiors and equals, but even below his inferiors, so that as far as right reason dictates, of his own poor ability he may humbly attend to them all, that he may be content with food and drink in accordance with nature's demands ; that he may manifest his humility in dress also or bodily attention just as his condition demands and is fitting, so that no one may justly rebuke him ; and finally, that in his own life, both outwordly and within, he may be humble before God and all men. Furthermore from this humility obedience takes its rise, whereby he shows himself bound and submissive to God and all His commands, and in the same way to his own superiors and the Holy Church, and to all good men in all good things ; and his senses

and animal faculties are subject to the highest faculties in undergoing hardship, and in the doing of bodily penance, as far as nature under the guidance of right reason is able to bear them. Moreover obedience produces the surrender of one's own will, whereby such a one denies himself in performing actions or in omitting them, and he does them or does them not, in accordance with the will of God, nay even rather in accordance with the will of his own superiors and of all those amongst whom he lives, and this too in lawful and profitable matters having regard to judgment or the decision of right reason. Each one who has gained and followed after the fear of God thus perfectly, each self will and private advantage having been trodden underfoot and spurned,—he indeed is of those of whom Christ spoke: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." For no one is so poor, nor has anyone forsaken more than he who has served God throughout his whole life and yet nevertheless desires nothing nor demands nor seeks aught save what God wishes to bestow. He clearly is the disciple

and imitator of Christ, who of a truth possesses nothing, and has a better confidence in God than if he had the choice of all His gifts in time and eternity. Nor is he unfittingly to be compared with the angelical spirits of the lowest order, inasmuch as he is their companion and is to be admitted into their order. For the angels offer reverence to God, and to all angelical spirits, and to men, and they venerate them, and they are exceedingly humble, and are most ready not only to serve God, but even individual men. And in the same way they are messengers, and minister now to God, now to men, now to all the orders of the angels. And because they have associated their own with the Divine Will, therefore they are henceforth resigned in will, and enjoy eternal happiness. A man of this kind is even like God, both as regards His divine and His human nature. For as regards His own divinity, God pays reverence to His human nature, and venerates it, since He bore and uplifted it above all heavens and all ranks of angels, and He moreover made known to us His own humility when He assumed our nature, and con-

joined and united it with Himself. He even became obedient to the desires, the sighs, the prayers or outcries of patriarchs and prophets, and finally yielded up His will in many and different ways, according to the scriptures, and followed after the will of His own friends. But Christ Jesus, as regards His Humanity, always venerated the Father with boundless reverence, looking to and seeking His praise, honour and glory everywhere in every action of His. And not only in acts of duty towards His Father, but also towards all men and towards His own disciples He ordered Himself lowly and humbly, ministering to them in all things necessary to them, and even in unspeakable humility washes their feet, and says of Himself: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." He yielded also to His Father in obedience and a resigned will throughout the whole period of His life, even to His last breath, and in the same way, wherever it was useful and profitable; to the Jewish law also, and sometimes even to the customs of the patriarchs and prophets. Whosoever, as was said, has been confirmed

in this fear of God, has adorned and transformed with the divine virtues the first element of earth, that is the irascible faculty. The earth is indeed adorned with trees bringing forth various fruits, which represent the intention rendered and applied to God with respect and reverence. It is adorned too, with many kinds of herbs, giving out a notable odour and distinctive fruits, which signify the reasonable or conscious service in unison with humility most unfeigned. It is adorned besides with creatures of various kinds, beasts of burden, herds of cattle and wild animals, which symbolise the animal senses and faculties, which he is to master and hold and ever restrain under a real obedience. This adorns in a far more marked degree the rational man—that is he who, renouncing himself, is submissive and obedient to God in his own will without retraction or dispute. In this manner both the earth and the rational faculty are adorned. And this is the Earthly Paradise in which God has placed man in order that he might labour in it and keep it. His labouring in it is to rely upon the virtues ;

his keeping it is to take care lest he fall into sin. For if he has sinned, he will lose both the fruits of it and Paradise itself. But in the midst of Paradise God planted the Tree of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The tree represents natural appetite or pleasure. Upon it various fruits are produced and increase, beautiful and sweet and delightful in their kind, which the devil and the world offer to the senses, that is, to the woman. Furthermore the woman, that is the senses offer these to the man, that is to the higher reason to which God entrusted the care and guardianship of Paradise. These are allowed to partake of consolation and joy from all the fruits of the virtues, and thus to be ever increasing in grace; but to partake of the fruit of pleasure is forbidden, that is, to live in accordance with the delights of nature. For in whatever supreme hour the reason feeds upon this fruit, and yields its assent to it together with the woman, that is with the senses and the evil spirit, against the prohibition and the wish of God, the man is cast forth outside Paradise, naked and

devoid of all virtues, shut out and set apart from God's eternal kingdom. But in order that any man may be able to possess this fear of God together with all the virtues which grow out from thence in the highest perfection, he must take care that as earnestly as possible his intention may be raised to God, and devoted and fitted for God, and that he may serve God in the fear of the Lord continually, and without retraction, by praising and worshipping Him ; also that he may make examination and consider, and with true understanding may seek and ponder within himself in what way he may be set free for God, and at the same time for all men, and that in addition he may persevere in virtues ever watchfully and carefully, by no means yielding to slumber, and undertaking his works with gladness and without weariness and slothfulness, and that henceforth he may hold his own will devoted and resigned to God through a true renunciation. Indeed whoever lives apart from pleasure or choice can neither suffer loss either in time or eternity. If it please him to apply his mind to this

point he will gain the fear of the Lord in his own supreme perfection. There are four things which restrain a man from being able to possess the fear of the Lord in the supreme perfection of his own nature. In those who lead an undisciplined life apart from care and solicitude, there is little fear that they may strive to serve God in accordance with His dignity. Ignorant and heavy and devoid of understanding, they learn with difficulty how to serve in the Palace of the Eternal King. Those who bear the yoke of obedience unwillingly and with annoyance must needs be full of complaints. As often as they unwillingly renounce their own will, they with difficulty accomplish anything, since they are gloomy. These four things impede a man from obtaining perfection in the fear of the Lord.

There are four other things which drive out and cast away this fear and all the virtues at the same time. Those who having abandoned God turn to creatures, bring upon God contempt and injury. Without knowledge, ignorant, not realizing themselves, such a one is far removed and alien from a living

humility. He who bestows no attention on the virtues, and does not train and exercise them, leads (as we have frequently said elsewhere) a life knowing nothing of obedience, or rather a life disobedient. Finally one's own will makes its own hell when they who are devoted to it are gloomy and wilful. These four things separate a man from God, and bring him to the anguish and disaster of eternal damnation.

CHAPTER XV.

Concerning the Gift of Devotion and the Virtues arising therefrom.

In accordance with the Holy Spirit's gift, adorning the soul with virtues, is Devotion, which makes a man kind, loyal, obedient, prepared for God and all men: considerate and looking benevolently upon all in their need who are placed amid sorrows and want. For from this kind regard and from devotion itself compassion or condolence originates whereby one compassionates the suffering Christ and likewise all mortals. Furthermore from condolence all actions of charity flow forth, since God has committed and entrusted to Charity the Seven Works of Mercy: Charity is that faithful servant whom the Lord appointed over His household, His whole kingdom and all the wealth and the treasures committed to him, that he may refresh them with food and drink, to receive them hospitably and to clothe

with garments those who have need of them, and to visit the wretched, the exiles and the sick, as the need of each appears to demand ; captives too, whether rightly or wrongly, but specially those thrown into jail for God's name,—let him consider in accordance with the judgement or discernment of right reason : in the same way let him accommodate his own business to the departed or to the dead who are to be buried ; and indeed if he should be rich, let him bury the dead by means of possessions given to him by God, and by his own wealth, out of true charity ; but if he be poor, by means of good will and devotion and generosity of heart, with a mind ready to supply what is necessary for the funeral, if he have the power, which assuredly has equal weight with God ; for devotion and compassion are virtues, not the external act itself, in those matters in which powers or temporal goods do not help ; so that finally he may show himself benevolent and compassionate, kind and faithful to his neighbours, not only in giving advice but also in deeds and matters themselves and

in whatsoever ways he can. For patience proceeds from devotion, since he cannot be patient except he be gentle and devout. For patience adorns, fortifies and guards a man in whatsoever afflictions he be in, so that in loss of property, in injuries and shame, in ill health, and in everything finally which can befall him from God, or from all creatures, let him be patient and let him always maintain peace and calmness of mind. Christ says of persons of this kind; "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth;" for the whole world belongs to the devout man in exercising deeds of compassion, and to him who serves God in showing pity: since also he is complete together with all that he possesses, he desires too that whatever on earth is subject to his own power shall serve God and his needy neighbours, to the honour of God. Likewise let him hold his own body in patience and gentleness; truly he is blest by that very thing when he holds himself and all things divinely created in accordance with the will, constitution and ordinance of God. Moreover he is very

much like the Angels of another choir who are called Archangels, because they have other spirits under them: he belongs to their companionship and rank, since they too are associated with all men in devotion and goodwill, especially to those whom they recognise as like themselves; who are such as exercise deeds of charity attentively and liberally. For it belongs to these to stimulate to charity and compassion all those who exercise themselves in such things; for they excel in dignity the spirits of the lowest order. For they are the highest messengers who are sent under a human form by God to man. Of these the Archangel Gabriel brought to the Virgin undefiled the message of clemency, of devotion, of pity or sympathy and generosity —that is that God should become man. Thus indeed the Archangels do service from love in very truth, to all those who in love are occupied with great zeal and much earnestness.

The same person who is full of love and devotion is like to God both in respect of His divinity and His humanity; for God in accordance with His divine nature abounds in so great tenderness and kindness

that everyone who has touched Him abounds in all gifts. In the same way He is filled with pity, sympathy and generosity; for He created and gave us the sky and the earth, and whatever is contained within their scope, that they may minister to man as far as he is faithful to God. Not content with these, He has promised that He will also bestow Himself together with ineffable joy, provided that they desire to fit themselves for it. Besides He waits most patiently for a man whilst he is being converted; and suffers and bears with the manifold wickedness, perversity and unkindness of men with boundless forbearance. But Christ also is and ever was most devoted and kind in accordance with His own humanity towards all men whatsoever in His own manner of life, full also of compassion which perhaps those tears which He shed abundantly over Jerusalem and its inhabitants sufficiently prove,—that is to say His enemies, having compassion on their loss and destruction; when through sympathy with most blessed Magdalen and Martha He joined His own lamenta-

tions and tears at the tomb of their brother Lazarus ; and when he sympathised with the widow and the people outside the gate of the city before which He raised up the widow's son. In the same way He was and is even now full of love and pity towards all who desire His pity. Out of love He refreshed those five thousand men with five barley loaves and two fishes. Out of affection and pity He has never failed any man in his need, but neither could He fail if only He knows that he confides in Him. Further in all His distresses and sufferings and in that final dereliction of Him by God the Father and by all His friends, He was most patient. Finally all this sadness and desolation He bore even to the death, together with the denial of His bodily nature. Whosoever has followed up this divine gift of Devotion in that perfection by which it is named, has adorned with a singular ornament of notable virtues another element in man, that of water, that is to say the Concupiscible power of the mind.

CHAPTER XVI.

How Devotion may Rightly be Compared to a River of Paradise.

Fittingly indeed is Devotion compared to a spring or that stream of the Earthly Paradise, which forsooth like a river makes the Concupiscible power flow forth in four streams. The first of these streams flows toward heaven, which is sympathy with Christ's Passion and with all His Saints who for His sake have suffered. That Concupiscible power is a river, joyous and cheerful, abounding in thanksgiving and full of praise, because their punishments and tortures have now passed away, and they are now about to enjoy eternal delights.

The second stream flows towards Purgatory, which is pity and compassion on all souls detained in punishment whereby they make satisfaction for their sins. This stream abounds in intimate and devout prayers

to God, whenever our friends have been placed in any necessity.

The third living stream of Paradise flows forth throughout the whole world, which is sympathy and pity for the necessities and the advantage of all Christendom. That stream bestows or acts with a disposing inwardness, so to speak, or internal disposition beyond that which all mortals together could offer in all the external works of mercy. The fourth stream which is charity and generosity, flows forth in external deeds upon all who are in need of it, and this by offering advice and by giving bodily assistance, and also temporal goods in every necessity of theirs. This stream ofttimes sustains great loads. These then are the four streams which in various ways adorn devotion.

CHAPTER XVII.

In what way Devotion is gained most perfectly, and what things hinder and what altogether prevent it.

Now for anyone desirous of possessing in the highest perfection this gift of Devotion, together with all the virtues which spring out of it, it is necessary that he have a mind tranquil and calm, without curiosity in matters or issues which are external to it, but always persevering in simplicity, and that he be gentle. For he who is mild-mannered nourishes piety without repining; and it is necessary for sustaining the life of things that he exercise a common compassion upon all the needy and the poor, and that he attend to and consider this diligently, by helping them by acts of virtue joined with right reason and a true discretion, and that he be liberal in charity and ministering deeds of compassion, which forsooth can be omitted

by no one, nor, too, let him minister it by favour, nor to kinsmen merely, but let him exercise a common kindness toward each in accordance with the dictates of right reason; and besides, that he be ever cheerful in adverse circumstances and in afflictions, and let him offer praises and thanks to God; to this end, that he be zealous of a free spirit, and deny his nature in true patience. He who is gentle leads an excellent life without repining. Four things there are which hinder a man from obtaining devotion in the highest perfection:—

I. That he be easily moved; that he be agitated in his senses, and externally and internally confused and aroused. This allows not a man to be gentle.

II. To sympathise with friends and kinsmen rather than with the generality of men, or all men in common.

III. To give charity not because of a necessity discovered, but by favour, belongs to a man wavering and hesitating in virtue.

IV. They who bear afflictions hardly are not able to rejoice at the highest giving of thanks. These things cause a man

to fail in the perfection of devotion, but sometimes they wholly drive out devotion itself.

There are still certain other things which despoil a man and deprive him of eternal happiness. A savage, furious, raging disposition is one devoid of kindness or devotion.

Nothing is further from the tyrant than to sympathise with anyone ; and therefore all men deservedly hold a man of this kind in detestation. To be ever burning with desire of wealth is exceedingly disgusting, and this is to lead a life devoid of devotion. To be impatient, and gloomy and bitter in afflictions or sufferings, causes tortures to a man and increases his sorrows, not does it simply deprive him of the virtue of gentleness, but also leads him into endless wretchedness and calamities.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of the Gift of Knowledge and of true Discretion.

The third gift of the Holy Spirit adorning the soul is Knowledge divinely infused, whereby the two preceding gifts, that is Fear and Devotion are adorned. Moreover this Knowledge is a certain supernatural light infused into the reasoning faculty of the mind, so that a man in accordance with the highest perfection may live out and follow after the rational life.

Out of this true Knowledge springs discretion or moderation; for when anyone by means of faith and loving or filial fear casts off and throws away the yoke of the devil from his neck—that is, his sins: and by humility and obedience has renounced his own will, is ready to obey God and by following all His virtues to carry the yoke, these things in his will adorn the Irascible faculty; and when through devotion, sym-

pathy, and liberality he assists and succours his neighbours in every necessity by means of works of mercy, this in the same way adorns his will in accordance with the Concupiscible faculty. But in every duty or service, and the same way in all other things discretion and moderation are to be observed that it may be known at what time, for what cause, to whom and the amount, that is, how much, or how little, and for what reason each of these single cases are to be ministered to and served. This adorns the intellect according to the Rational faculty. This discretion or moderation is the perfection and the ornament of all the moral virtues, and apart from it no virtue can be lasting, since indeed it is the parent of the virtues. This causes a man to consider what he may give up to the honour of God, and what may be either the necessity or the profit of his neighbour, and that he ought to satisfy each one of these. But hence the understanding of himself issues forth, that is, that which he perceives and experiences in reality—that he ofttimes fails God in shewing Him reverence, honour, praise,

veneration and the service of humility; and in the same way he is frequently in fault, wanting towards his neighbours, with respect to time of charity, want of interest or neglect. Thence arises concerning himself and all his deeds sorrow of mind and displeasure, because he knows that he gives satisfaction neither to God nor to anyone, neither accomplishes that which rightly he should do. This truly he accomplishes, to have small esteem as for himself so also for all his deeds.

The knowledge of our own being causes us to consider ourselves—whence we came, where we are, and whither we are going. We came indeed from God, but we are in exile; for a loving desire always aspires to God, and desires to be with God, and always spends its time in exile. As to the body we are outwardly occupied in various pains and sorrows of hunger, thirst, cold, heat, illnesses, and that kind of manifold ills and defects. Frequently by hellish opponents, often by men are we grievously distracted and beset. An infused knowledge teaches us divinely all these things, so

that we shall not make more of them than we ought, nor be immoderately uplifted, or rejoice amid changing and fleeting circumstances, nor in all our actions, but rather grieve and mourn that we are God's unprofitable servants, and most of all lacking in all virtues. And this is the highest and chiefest thing of that gift of Knowledge divinely infused. Of such Christ spoke when He said: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." They who mourn and grieve that they fail in offering and yielding service and honour to God, although they do whatever they can—this proceeds from their love and faithfulness to God, and sets forth their virtues. Even though all such virtues that were ever perfected might suffice for one alone, it would appear to them far too little, because for Him whom men love they desire, study, and prefer to spend far more in honour and service than can be offered by all mortals. Therefore blessed are those who mourn, since they will be comforted in the eternal kingdom of God.

There are some also who are like the angelic

spirits of the third order, to whose society and rank they belong. Those spirits are called by the name of Virtues, because they are brighter or more eminent in discretion than the two lower ranks: wherefore they even direct and enlighten them in all their actions, since in discretion (as I said) they are endowed before them with a more eminent understanding. They can enlighten even men of their own light and inspirations by means of images and similitudes; and there is much spiritual custom and habit common to them and those men who are similar in divine knowledge, and still more in clear discernment. They are called Virtues because they have authority to command the two lower ranks whenever they desire and need requires. And in the lowest hierarchy they hold a place, and conclude and complete its three ranks. Finally of these they are chief and supreme on whom it falls to direct and control the moral life. By that divine knowledge and discernment by which each one is filled, the same is like unto God both with regard to His divinity and to His humanity. But God with

regard to the nature of divinity, inclining Himself downwards, in His eternal knowledge and discernment beholds all creatures, heaven and earth, and whatsoever in them is, in accordance with the control of true discernment, and arranges, adorns, and orders them. And to all men severally in all their actions and in all modes in every life in which they accommodate and apply themselves to Him, He responds, and in the same way illumines each several one outwardly and inwardly, according to every mode in which each one is capable.

But in accordance with His humanity, Christ Jesus was filled with knowledge and discernment, and preserved it most exactly throughout His whole life and in all His actions. He who obtained and followed out this gift of divine Knowledge and discernment with that perfection of which we have spoken, adorned the third element, so to say, of Air, that is the Rational faculty of the soul, and enlightened it with singular clearness. But the Rational faculty, irradiated and transfused by the light of divine Knowledge, is an adornment of earth, that is,

the Irascible faculty, which is compared to the earth for this reason, that it is the lowest of the faculties, and itself urges a man to submit himself to humility and obedience. It is also an ornament to the waters, that is, to the Concupiscible faculty, which causes a man to flow forth in works of mercy. Further, of this Rational faculty the air is adorned with multitudinous birds, that is with separate actions. For some of the birds walk on the ground, others move on the waters, others flit through the air, others finally, fly in the supreme region not far remote from fire.

Those which walk on the earth signify those who liberally bestow temporal goods and possessions for the use of the poor in accordance with the control or discernment of reason, and these most of all benefit or profit men so far as concerns their bodies.

But we must flow forth on the waters to all the boundaries of the earth, that is, on the compassion, pity, and mercy shown to all the needs of all men. For those who do this are of all others most useful for conveying spiritual help and assistance to the human race in accordance with their bent.

Moreover we must fly in the air of the Rational faculty, that is, that each one may examine, look into and search himself in all his actions in accordance with the discernment of reason. And they of this kind are of most benefit to themselves.

Finally like the eagle, we must soar beyond the air of the Rational faculty as far as the fire of the divine charity, that is, that we may refer all actions and virtues to the honour of God with boundless desire. Thus we have now three lower powers of the soul adorned with divine virtues: the Irascible, together with loving or filial fear, humility, obedience and abnegation of every possession; the Concupiscible, with long suffering, devotion, sympathy and liberality or generosity; and finally the Rational, with knowledge, discernment, and an intentional ordering of all things.

That active life, where it was said to have obtained these virtues, and followed them out by reason, is the perfect one, and he who is of this character is prepared and fitted for all the virtues and for receiving all the gifts of God.

CHAPTER XIX.

What he must do who desires to possess the Gift of Knowledge; and of the things which hinder and even destroy it.

But to him who desires to possess this divine gift of Knowledge together with every discernment that springs out of it, it must of necessity be granted that he have a mind calm and serene, rejoicing in sweet peace, and orderly in great adversities, and that he bear equably the curses and execrations of men, their quarrels and their bitterness, and that he behold everything wisely and fully, and clearly recognise without doubtfulness what should be done in accordance with discernment: so as to know, to give and to receive, to dispose, rule and control all things rightly, which is to spend a life in union with truth; and in the same way let him always mark,

consider and note all his actions, which is to lead a life illumined with true discernment whereby indeed he perceives and beholds that he neither benefits nor repays God or man as rightly he ought, but is ever falling short of the perfection of justice: whence he recognises and appreciates his own imperfection and deficiency. Moreover when he has perceived all these things he will be displeased with himself with a true humiliation and depreciation of himself, and he will lament and accuse his own deficiency with a sad and mournful heart; and with this understanding will he possess the virtues in their excellence and nobility.

But there are four certain hindrances impeding a man from obtaining or possessing the gift of knowledge in its highest perfection.

I. To burn with great desire of the virtues apart from a discreet consideration,—that is assuredly a hindrance to knowledge.

II. In virtuous actions that he should be preoccupied and unquiet in heart obscures and deadens the reason.

III. He who in his virtues is pleasing to himself, nor bewails his own deficiency, is without true understanding.

IV. He who spends his life in this world and is too little desirous of being set free from exile is wanting in the gift of Knowledge.

Other four things can be added to these which undermine, overturn and banish all virtue.

I. An irate mind, raging and boiling with the madness of anger is destitute of Knowledge.

II. To manifest savage movements before himself, a cruel countenance, and likewise to swear and utter curses is the mark of an unwise and indiscreet or unreasoning man.

III. To lay claim to a good deal on his own account, but to be persuaded of no good in others gives promise of no virtue in him,—this is the mark of a man who least of all understands himself.

IV. That he should be content with this world, and that he should not grieve over his ill deeds,—this plainly leads to hell.

CHAPTER XX.

Concerning the Gift of Fortitude, and the Virtues which draw their origin therefrom.

The fourth gift of God conferring beauty on the mind, is Spiritual Fortitude. Just as the three preceding gifts adorn a man within and without in the active life, and dispose, order and perfect him, so this gift adorns a man inwardly and outwardly in the life of the affections. This Spiritual Fortitude raises the mind above all temporal things, and exhibits to the reason the properties of the Persons, that is, the Father's power, the Son's wisdom, and the Holy Spirit's goodness, and it inflames him who is affected with a certain kind of sensible love, so that he may disencumber and liberate himself from all things in his memory, and that reason may contemplate eternal truth in all its works, and that, affected by sensible love, he may continually impress and sink himself into the good-

ness of God. And finally all the powers of the soul, as well external as internal, raise themselves up into the mind, and are united to it, so that a man of that disposition ignores and estimates at little value everything that is in the world; nor can any other creature compel him—nay, nor hinder nor oppose him—so as not to be able as often as he desires to entrust and offer himself to the divine goodness, which is a proof that he is henceforth freed and loosed from all creatures nor can by any of them be held captive or ensnared. For this reason he is strong, because he has conquered all earthly things and all powers of the mind, and has united and elevated each one in all his actions.

Moreover out of this Fortitude and the enkindling disposition proceed the rendering of praise and honour, devotion, inward and holy prayers of the mouth, of the heart, of the intention, and of actions least of all feigned, and by these very matters the sensible desire, or the enkindling of affection, is increased.

For that very object, which is eternal

truth, infinite wisdom and devotion or bounty, is so delectable in its appearance that desire constantly enlarges with greater increases. Further, by this very desire and intuition a man's heart is wounded and inwardly perceives itself pierced and consumed with sorrow under a certain introversion in itself. And the oftener it turns itself thither, the more grievous does the wound become, but sometimes so great a consolation and sweetness is inwardly opened to a man, that he scarcely knows how to contain himself, and knows not how he should bear himself. For he thinks that no one has ever experienced the things which he is experiencing, and from thence arises jubilee, because he cannot restrain himself. Sometimes when he is situated apart in secret, away from men (for God desires not his friends to be affected with ignominy), such an impatience possesses him outwardly and inwardly with so great a vehemence, that in all his powers and members there is so joyous an experience that he imagines with a bursting heart he will yield up the ghost, and this brings about in him inebriation and ecstasy. Thus indeed

God makes his friends to be happily foolish. Sometimes this ecstasy is wont to grow to so great a height that the matter becomes serious, and more frequently he is compelled to break out into shouting whilst he is being spiritually touched or pricked—when he himself perceives or understands it, either by a bare introversion into the coruscation of divine light, or its reflection. But from all these actions an immense desire is engendered in each of the separate virtues, of satisfying God, the gift of this divine Fortitude effecting and performing this. And these are they concerning whom the Lord speaks: "Blessed are those who spiritually hunger and thirst after justice." For it is by this justice that set free and delivered from all creatures, in intention, desire or affection, in soul, body, eyes, hands, and our whole faculty altogether, we are raised up again, so that we yield and offer up to God, both in time and in eternity our praise and honour, nor do we in this self-same thing receive or seek delectation. For that brings about double-mindedness, and is a hindrance to justice; although he who in this way leads a

life devoted to love will never lack great delectations. He who has thus perfectly followed out this gift of spiritual Fortitude as we have said, may be rightly compared to the angelical spirits of the fourth rank and is to be received into their choir and fellowship. But those spirits are called Powers, that is Powerful Princes before the Throne of the Most Adorable Trinity, who together with their whole powers are uplifted in the most consuming affection without intermission; they are strengthened in themselves to contemplate the Most Holy Trinity; and they are all able to enlighten by means of this elevated affection, all those like themselves, in the application and joining together in love. For they rule even the three ranks of the lowest hierarchy, whenever they are burning with a more ardent love than they, and they are endowed with a brighter understanding than those who have the active life to control, to govern, and to rule. Moreover these—which is the highest act—never cease continually to praise God with all their powers; and they are able to hold demons in check, lest they should, in accordance with their

own wicked and perverse desire, injure or offer hindrances to men. We whoever has followed up this Spiritual Fortitude possesses a certain similitude both of the divinity of God and the humanity of Christ. For in accordance with the nature of the Eternal Father, the memory contemplates without ceasing the unity of its own fertile, paternal nature, and out of the Wisdom (which is the Son) of the Two Persons in One, by mutual contemplation, there flows forth or proceeds an immense and infinite Love, that is the Holy Spirit, by which love the Father and the Son are bound together and conjoined in unity ; and these Two Persons ever hunger after love, which hunger is nothing else than the desire of flowing forth continually into Unity, and to be active without intermission within the Most High Trinity.

But as regards His humanity, Christ together with all the powers of His soul and body, with all His senses and members, both was and is drawn up into desire, and He Himself in all His actions and whole life, follows after and looks towards His Father's honour, and reverentially renders praises and thanks

to the Father; but He thoroughly denied Himself, which was great humility, and willed to discharge our debt and to satisfy justice. Whosoever obtains this gift of Spiritual Fortitude by this means has adorned the fourth element of fire, that is, his free-will, with singular virtues. Fire is truly an ornament to the rest of the elements, and claims amongst them the chief place and dignity for itself, and by its own nature and inherent nobility is always borne on high; and in all creatures it moves and works subtilly. Nor is it absurd to compare it to freedom of will, touched or aroused by the gift of divine Fortitude, because too, a will of that kind strives and struggles to flame ever upwards with immense desire; and this verily, by a divine bestowal or gift, is conferred on the soul, so amid all that the world contains, it can no longer tarry with delight in creatures. It burns therefore with a fire, desire having been drawn upward; and thus no one shall be able to attack it thus adorned with the true dignity and nobility of the virtues, since forsooth, it pertains to the excellence and nobility of the virtues.

CHAPTER XXI.

THAT ANYONE MAY OBTAIN THE GIFT OF FORTITUDE IN A HIGH DEGREE, AND WHAT THINGS HINDER IT, OR DRIVE IT AWAY.

Now he who wishes to possess this gift sublimely and excellently must strive that he be above all mortals in an uplifted mind and directed in interior things. It belongs to Spiritual Fortitude to contemplate the goodness of God, and to shun whatever draws away from it or is dissimilar to it; and in the same way constantly to attribute to Almighty God praise and honour with great strenuousness and heedfulness. He who has been admitted to the Palace of the Heavenly King will be free to attend to divine praises with immense desire. Desire brings about a wound and languor of the heart, and engenders an impatient hunger. He who could endure this until God should

apply a remedy to the wound, would be leading a truly perfect and excellent life.

To be possessed by a certain continual hunger of yielding to God perfect and entire praise, honour and reverence, that is, that the man himself should know that God rules—I know how to set forth and express nothing better than this, whereby he may be carried forth into endless blessedness.

There are four things which hinder and disturb a man in Spiritual Fortitude.

I. To seek for strange things, or to grasp at delights in a mind at ease.

II. To follow and strive with eagerness after softness and sweetness, which are external matters.

III. To seek and follow after pleasure, whence arise many inconveniences and miseries and the lessening of the internal life.

IV. Finally to experience little hunger.

Such indeed are very far from perfection; nor can they satisfy perfect justice, nor offer perfect justice.

There are four other things which overthrow, banish and snatch away Spiritual

Fortitude. That a man should be disturbed at heart and preoccupied, and that he should depend on worthless deeds, robs him of inward devotion or an inner life. He who has never been admitted into the Palace of the King within knows not how to attribute praises to God, because he is inflamed by no desire, and because neither inwardly nor outwardly has he received any wound of love, and suffers from the disease of envy. Those who have never suffered the hunger of affection or desire can never be cured or healed. Whosoever shall have read these things attentively will find that it has been sufficiently explained that the hungering after justice may be cast away.

CHAPTER XXII.

Concerning certain Higher Virtues and more spiritual actions which proceed from the Gift of Fortitude.

But yet there are certain other sublimer virtues and more spiritual actions flowing forth from this divine gift of Spiritual Fortitude. For where this lofty gift has uplifted the free mind and all the powers of the soul into desire, praise and liberty, and into the contemplation of the loftiness, wisdom, goodness, devotion, liberality and exhaustless wealth flowing out of the sublime unity, then a man of this disposition now perceives that far less than is meet of praise, honour and veneration is paid to God. Thereupon he turns his regard to creatures who wander in their exile along by-paths. And hence spiritual sympathy and compassion herein spring forth, whenever he descries and discovers the most grievous losses of men, for since they are so wretched, and exposed to so many misfortunes, and might

obtain such immense riches, honours, and delights (provided that they would desire them and accommodate themselves therein) and might serve God honourably and lovingly—nevertheless all these things are ignored and forsaken by them,—this matter causes him such pain that he who has not experienced it cannot indeed understand it. Therefore again he turns his eyes now to the infinite goodness, liberality and kindness, pity or compassion and mercy of God, and now to the necessity of wretched men. And from this survey a very great love towards God, and towards all men generally, springs and arises herein: at the same time even a certain fixed character is brought back to his remembrance, and he is moved with a singular affection towards it; and if indeed he feel no hindrance nor similitude in his ascent to God, he intercedes between God and all men as though a mediator and intervening agent. But hence intimate and devout supplications arise, whose power and efficacy are so great that they are able to bring about and procure even far greater things than can be told. For since the

boundless goodness of God shows itself to be so kind, liberal, rich and favourable to all men, and widely flowing forth and poured out, this circumstance instils so great a trust in a man thus praying, that he would seem about to obtain easily whatever he has sought for himself. In the meantime however, can he neither ask nor seek of his own will either contentiously or pertinaciously, but his will expires in the infinite goodness of God. For he knows forthwith that the love of God towards men is boundless, and far greater than ever was bestowed on the whole human race at the same time. Therefore to this infinite love, devotion and beneficence he commits and commends the entire needs of all Christendom, and whatever may be able to be of service to it. For then he observes good men and saints and the blessed in the heavenly kingdom, how through them the divine gifts of grace and glory have flowed forth : and how God, like the vastest sea, pours out Himself together with incomprehensible delights, and flows forth upon all those who can receive Him, and again flows back and carries them with

Himself, and draws them inwardly into the most wide ocean of His own eternity. For they are not able, on account of the object of unity set forth to them, to stand or remain in themselves, but they are compelled to flow and to reflow in true love. But hence even a keener hunger of completing and perfecting justice arises. Such as these are, so to speak, the loftiest giants and notable heroes, adorned sublimely and excellently with virtues, whom no one should revile or accuse, since they are leading a life filled with truth, and they are they of whom Christ says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after justice, for they themselves shall be satisfied:" here indeed by dying to their own will into the will of God, they experience such joy and freedom that they can neither choose nor seek anything save that which God wills both in time and in eternity. But in the future eternal Kingdom of God they will be satisfied, seeing that there, by the disposition of justice, or by a just decree, all things will be fulfilled or perfected: and to all things severally in heaven and earth and under the earth

shall that be restored which is right and fitting. By this very thing too shall the saints be satisfied, the will of whom indeed is just and right. As many as in this manner obtain this gift of Spiritual Fortitude are like the blessed spirits of the fifth rank of the angels, and are to be included in their companionship and rank. Moreover those angelical spirits are called Princes, and are far loftier than the Powers ; for the Powers are uplifted to God by unending desire, together with a particular praising ; but the lofty Princes are uplifted by greater praise and devotion. And by the love in which they burn for God, they desire also to increase and to urge on His praise and honour, and nevertheless it is plainly apparent to them that they are able to accomplish this neither in proportion to their own intention and enkindled desire, nor in proportion to His incomprehensible dignity, as though God is to be affected neither by any honours nor by any praise, either from themselves or from all His creatures ; and this causes them to gaze downwards, and to look upon rational creatures, equally fashioned with

themselves for the praise and honour of God. Then indeed they contemplate wretched men thoroughly blinded, wandering away through strange paths, powerless in themselves and in all their faculties through their sins and their own perversity: in considering these they are affected by immense pity and compassion, and they friendlywise join with and apply themselves to them, and entreat God by their own longings that He may allow His goodness to flow upon them, and draw them upward from changing and outward matters, so that by this means He Himself may be honoured by all creatures, and that they may merit to taste Him and enjoy Him throughout all eternity. Behold these are the most powerful and strong Princes, who are both lifted upward, and also incline themselves and condescend to creatures; and they have the power of commanding the spirits of the fourth rank, that is the Powers, that they may enlighten men who are uplifted or drawn upward, and that they may continue and burn in the praise of God. For the Powers are drawn upward,

but for this reason they know not how to turn themselves downward, inasmuch as this is beyond them. Therefore they are able to enlighten, keep, protect and urge on to greater and more good the men who are like themselves, even those also who are below them in the active life, and in the lowest hierarchy of the angels.

Now whosoever has obtained this Spiritual Fortitude perfectly is like unto God, both as regards His divine as also His human nature. For God, as regards His own nature, looks upon Himself in all His wealth, and with the most bountiful and boundless happiness, and in the same way, with His own goodness, benevolence and liberality: at the same time even, beholding the wretched who are averse from Him, and are turned towards trifles the most empty, momentary, and external, together with their perverted will, uncaring and estimating as nothing both Himself as well as all His gifts, He is moved with unspeakable sympathy and pity for them, because He cannot share Himself and His gifts among them. He therefore permits wars to arise, their powers to be rent

asunder or to burn up in conflagrations; in order that perhaps thus He may by them be recognised. Some He visits with good, some with ill health; these He makes rich, those He allows to be pressed down under many burdens. Some He gladdens with joy, others He afflicts with sorrow and grief; some He suffers to be branded with perpetual shame, whereby they may recognise Him and consider their own salvation. Moreover He performs all these things by reason of His boundless faithfulness and love. Therefore those very persons who desire to be converted and to return to their own true Lord, are able to cast off their vices and to persevere in His love. I have written this more widely and in detail that I may set forth His boundless wisdom, unutterable pity, and immeasurable benevolence and generosity. But He turns Himself in peculiar love to all and each of good men, in accordance with the dignity and merit of each one. And truly by that very Eternal Wisdom He beholds their loving or affectionate desires drawn upward, both in heaven as on earth, so that evidently they

flow on together into a supreme unity with great vehemence, inward activity, and with all their powers at the same time united and bound together. But charity and devotion, or infinite inexhaustible bounty, together with all their own riches—which are itself—also pour themselves out together with the treasures of their own gifts. Therefore he who is able to draw may fill up all his water-pots. Yet that which is drawn is the creature or created things: wherefore it comes about that here they are not able to endure it. But truly none the less do they always draw and drink, nor do they desire to recall to mind that all things are to be discharged before they may depart. Let them drink in the meantime if it please them; but afterward they will be thoroughly dispossessed. It is commonly said that a thing kept is profitable enough that brings back its own price again. Whatever therefore, they gain cannot remain with them, since indeed they are they who stand firm in the presence of a unity which demands from them far more than they can discharge. Again therefore, together with all which

they can offer, flowing back inwards, they taste unity. And again streams of grace and glory flow into each in accordance with his own excellence and dignity. And this flowing and reflowing brings about an eternal hunger. While they are flowing inwardly with desire, thence they experience hunger, and taste unity, and because they ever experience unity a continual hunger also conjoined with great appetite is present within them. Furthermore, Christ possessed most perfectly the gift of Spiritual Fortitude with regard to His humanity, since He was ever intent on freedom, and on the manifestation of His Father's praise and honour, with intense desire. And He Himself ever inclined and even now never ceases to incline Himself to all the needs of everyone, and to sinners of whatever kind, with intense pity and sympathy, and with the most intimate and devoted supplications to God the Father for the need of all men. And of a truth if anyone should not hesitate to confide in Him as he ought, whatever he ought to strive for, he would readily obtain. For towards all good men He was ever disposed with so great a benevolence, and even now is im-

pelled and moved so that He disdained not to redeem us by Himself and His death, and to discharge our debts; and He bestowed His Flesh upon us for food and His Blood for drink, so that it should be possible for Him to enter and flow into our body, soul, and all our powers, so that He should consume us, that is, that He should draw us wholly into Himself, whereby we should possess Him with a thirsty and desiring love, and that thus He in turn should be able to possess us with a penetrable or rather a penetrating enjoyment. And this is to eat and to be eaten. Of a truth I have ventured to affirm that he who perhaps has opened the mouth even very little, has been consumed by Christ. For since Christ is the Way and our Saviour, whosoever is consumed by Him is dispersed into unity, being wholly dissolved. And whatever desire He has, if in His most vehement love we are consumed, how immense forthwith is then His love? But thus to devour and to be devoured is the thirst for righteousness, for which, not to say in the whole duration of this present life but also in the endless ages we shall eternally have leisure.

CHAPTER XXIII.

How Free Will resembles Fire in Four Ways.

Now whosoever has obtained this gift in that manner has adorned the fourth element of fire, that is, liberty of choice or will, which in four ways presents a certain similitude of fire. For fire from the inward nobility of its own nature always aspires on high, but is kept down and driven below by the great force of the starry heaven and the firmament. And there is in it the subtile,—and that the invisible, spiritual and effectual force which acts upon all inferior creatures. And by it all created things in the earth, in the waters, and in the air, live, grow and are preserved in life. Finally in its own place it persists above all the other elements, enlightening, warming and rendering fertile whatever things are in the earth. And these four qualities are found also in free will

adorned with divine Fortitude. For such a will has cast off, driven away and renounced the yoke of demoniacal bondage and of all creatures, as far as concerns the vices and their fruition. And it has drawn up the mind and all the powers of the soul to praise its God and Lord through all eternity; and it obtains or possesses unity with a perpetual stability. And turning itself downwards it beholds the necessities of all mortals with true pity; and it strives and desires to render all creatures productive of the virtues. And if anywhere it is not able to ensure this, it grieves and mourns. Finally it aspires again toward celestial things with immense devotion and fervour, in the manner of a fire burning and absorbing all things, and drawing them into unity. But thus far let what is said suffice concerning fire.

CHAPTER XXIV

In what ways this Fortitude may be obtained, and what things hinder it, and what things wholly destroy it.

But if anyone desire thus to ensure and possess these things, he must study that he burn with desire—all unnecessary occupations set aside, and that he may be at liberty for beholding divine goodness, and the richest benevolence and liberality. He is to look also with the greatest pity upon rational creatures given up to and cleaving to this world: for assuredly it is altogether pitiable and an immense unhappiness that they should not praise and worship God with all their ability; since they ever remain without knowledge of these delights which are the meat and drink of the friends of God, bringing to them the sweetest inebriation. Let him therefore pray God

that He may be merciful to those unhappy persons, and in accordance with His clemency, He may allow the streams of His own benevolence to flow upon them, that converted to Him by the manifestation of praise and honour they may flow again into unity. For truly as many as we have said, hunger after justice, these have obtained full health. Those who discover these things now mentioned in themselves ought not to doubt but that they shall climb up to the highest step of Spiritual Fortitude. But there are four certain things which not uncommonly hinder a man from obtaining this gift of Fortitude. Namely, not devoutly to consider the goodness of God, and the evil or wicked works and deeds of men is great folly and ingratitude. Whoso with sorrow does not see them so sadly going astray, and that God remains hid and concealed from them, has too little pity. Thus those who from their heart do not desire and seek to be recovered and converted to the praise and honour of God,—their devotion is cool and slack. Indeed those, whoever they be, that burn with a moderate desire have

in no wise risen to any height, a thing which can be thence perceived—inasmuch as their hunger is small. There are four other things which however great the virtue be, not only hinder, but even in a certain way pluck it forth and drive it away. Neither to care for God or men belongs to great impiety, great shame and excessive blindness. Whosoever grieves not that such do not join and apply themselves to God, whence the streams of grace are flowing, is ignorant of pity. It belongs to hatred and envy that he should not turn himself to praise God, nor to seek nor desire it from anyone. In those in whom there is no hunger to satisfy justice, whatever that demands, it is clear that they least of all have risen in Spiritual Fortitude.

CHAPTER XXV.

Concerning the Gift of Counsel.

The fifth gift of the Holy Spirit bringing grace to the soul, is Counsel. Through the gift of Spiritual Fortitude a man is drawn and uplifted to God in praise and devotion; and in the same way he is turned downwards in pity and compassion to men given up to sins; and again he is drawn up to God by prayers and desires, so that having pitied such unhappy persons, He may bestow His own grace upon them, relying on which they may turn themselves to His praise. But in order that he may obtain this, and that God may be praised, a certain hunger, with love and desire, is increased and grows. Thus God discloses and shows Himself to be most bounteous, most benevolent, most wealthy, most loveable, and most full of delights and unspeakable sweetness and joys; and all these things a man of this kind

looks upon in the Person of the Holy Spirit, who is boundless love. Moreover, discerning that this love is boundless and immeasurable, he is sure that he ought to follow after these qualities, seeing that infinite goodness is filled with infinite virtues also. Whilst therefore, he is considering, beholding and feeling love, and whatever it has divinely in itself of pre-determined and infused endowments and gifts, he readily perceives that God continually and without intermission flows on in Himself, together with all His gifts at all hours. And on account of this very thing he grows impatient with love, nor is he able to restrain or contain himself from flowing back again with all his powers towards incomprehensible goodness and the most august Trinity, and the most delightful Unity, as far as is possible, and thus again he flames with desire, and reflows towards the same Unity. Hence now flows the gift of divine Counsel, which is a certain touch or instinct in the mind of man, proceeding from the eternal generation of the Father, when He begets His own Son in His sublime mind, that is, begets Him above

reason in the essence of the soul. And by this touch the soul is rendered noble and supernatural in a marvellous manner; nevertheless it is not able to comprehend or understand what that is which it perceives, notwithstanding he is greatly desirous to know; but the more deeply he explores and beholds the less he attains it. And this is a certain singular or special operation of the Father in the memory of the soul, which it has obtained by that very thing, because it has immersed or passed itself into the sublime Unity of its own mind, so lovingly, and with so great a hunger of desire or affection—not that it becomes the Unity of the divine nature, where the Father brings forth His Son, and possesses Him in the fecundity of His own nature, but yet where the Persons by the power of their charity inwardly reflow with boundless love. For it perceives in no wise by a divine method this Unity at this step; otherwise it would fall into that which is ignorant of the method, and into fruitful love. Moreover it perceives it in the manner of a creature which is not completely sublime, but there is a certain simili-

tude of divine unity, and it excites an impatience of love. By this touch of soul and by that of the Son, that is, by the generation of the Eternal Wisdom, a certain magnificent light of the soul illumines the intellect, enlightening the reason with singular clearness. But the Wisdom of God supplies this light in order that it may render the intellect of the soul like Himself, and may enlighten and lift up the same, and the reason receives the same light and radiation as often as with true affection and desire it uplifts itself, and impresses or submerges itself into Unity. But whatever the cause may be, by which the reason thus illuminated might wish to know for certain, or whatever may hinder itself lest it should not persist in this Unity, so pleasant and delightful to itself, even from hence does this touch arise, whatsoever also it may be. Therefore prudently and diligently investigating and considering attentively, it discovers an upwelling spring in the depth of the mind itself, or of a certain living fountain out of a vital and fertile depth, which is the Unity of God, and the origin of the Persons, from which the

unity of the soul depends and issues. For this depth is fertile, and the beginning and end of all created things. Further, this welling spring and that touch is so marvellous and so extremely delightful to the intellect, is so pleasing and friendly, or so lovely to the will, and so desirable in no common degree, that the soul is seized upon by the impatience and heat of love, and by an immense desire. Again therefore, it attempts to investigate and to explore that which is in opposition to it, so that neither in God nor in itself is it able to stand still and dwell. It determines therefore, to perambulate and survey from the height to the depth the kingdom of its own soul; and here great is the agility and swiftness of the reason. Therefore its looks towards that supreme thing for which, in the unity of its own mind, it has impressed itself, whence indisputably the three supreme forces derive their origin, and from the same quarter, that is, they reflow into the same unity of the mind, where moreover, that touch exists and is the upwelling spring of the divine fountain. And this unity of the mind is a ray and a spring

where all the gifts of God are supplied and poured forth, according to the scale of virtues and in proportion to their dignity. But however, at this step this same ray remains unrecognized, unless herein a certain impatience of love is felt. Furthermore those who are fitted for the active life perceive not this ray in so sublime a manner, since nevertheless, all their goodwill and all their love and the whole of their virtues receive and maintain their life in that self-same way. But that it is not felt by them in so lofty a manner follows from the fact that in the kingdom of the soul and its desire, they have not climbed far enough, but are still occupied below. But this ray streams down from God on the uppermost reach of the soul, and as far as it can be felt and comprehended by the soul, it is a creature, but as far as it cannot be comprehended by it, it is God, and this is the cause of its impatience. But yet here the soul ever remains in unity, according to its intellect and by its faculties, indeed, it flows forth outwardly to work; but according to the foundation or essence of its faculties, it persists within in the mind's

unity. Meanwhile nevertheless, it should desire with all its power to follow up that delicious spring by means of unity, in order that it should find that living fount whence this spring issues; but just as it attempts it with greater desire, so it becomes the more impatient and experiences a greater influx of love. But yet that which is created, or the creature's desire, is not able to follow up to God perfectly, because in a certain manner it works both in light and in created love; whence it happens that at this step it always labours under an influx of love, which indeed is something distinctive and a certain lofty similitude of the Ever Adorable Trinity. But perceiving that it avails or attains naught, but that it continually loses all its labour and striving, the sublime memory now reflects upon the whole kingdom of the soul,—if by any means aught be wanting therein which must be disposed, ordered or ruled.

Wherefore it despatches two messengers downwards into the soul's kingdom, one of which is the reason, with wisdom divinely enlightened; the other is agility or speed,

urged and impelled both by the Father's touch or instigation, as well as by the holy frenzy or influx of love dwelling in the soul. Speed compels it to hasten exceedingly through every kingdom, and this by the action of the Lord from whom it was dispatched, and by the impact and stimulus of the divine touch and of inflowing love. Enlightened reason moreover, studiously searches out and considers ; for it serves the Eternal Wisdom. Thus speed and enlightened reason run together in the kingdom, and order, rule and govern all things.

Moreover they discover the great need and defect of the virtues, and that the whole kingdom is void and despoiled of the adornment of excellent and virtuous actions. Whatever the reason may be able to observe and perceive, nevertheless it has not whence it may give bountifully and help this need. At the same time therefore, again they run up toward unity, and open it up, and are conquered by sublime love by reason of the perfect tasting of God, and because of inflowing and languishing impatience. But love, when this message has been per-

ceived—that there is so great a poverty of goods and adornment of virtues in the soul's kingdom—in like manner taking into partnership its own two daughters, that is to say, compassion and generosity or devotion, with the illumined reason as their attendant, and with speed as the handmaid of them all,—they all hasten down at once into the soul's kingdom. And the enlightened reason rules and orders all things in accordance with justice. But love bestows all things liberally, and out of compassion takes pity upon every need; in this way a man of that kind has dominated, ruled and ordered the whole kingdom of the soul in accordance with reason, and regarded every necessity compassionately, has liberally endowed the needy and necessitous of that kingdom, and finally has taken possession of that kingdom by means of love in unity. And this is called the affective, loving life of truth; and those of such a character are they who excellently carry out the counsels of God, and love God with their whole soul. They are they of whom Christ speaks: "Blessed are the merciful

for they shall obtain mercy." For such are truly merciful, that is to say, are those whom God and divine charity drive and impel to and fro in the kingdom of the soul, so that they take pity on the needs of all men. And they pursue the very mercy of God into unity to that point when no longer are they able to proceed further. Rightly enough are they compared to the angels of the sixth rank, to whose fellowship, company and order they belong. For the angelical spirits are called Dominations, because they dominate and command the five inferior ranks, and all these same inferior orders of angels and spirits enlighten, rule and order the former, seeing that these are enlightened more fully beyond them, and are more highly adorned with virtues, and that there is given to them a spiritual usage and conversation with men, who are their like in virtues and clearness of life.

Finally these move heaven on behalf of the need of all creatures who live in earth, air and water.

These men have even a kind of likeness to the highest and the productive divine nature.

For the most glorious nature of God the Father, which is the first and chief cause of all creatures, since it is productive, is unable to contain itself in the Unity of Paternity by reason of its productiveness; indeed the same God the Father begets the Eternal Wisdom without cessation, which is the Son of the Father. And this Son of God is begotten without intervention, and is both begotten and yet remains according to this essence, unbegotten. For He is in the Father as though in His own proper and eternal fount, by Whom abiding or in Him indwelling He issues, and yet without going forth tarries. And nevertheless the Son is one and the same. For when the Father looks upon His own Son, Eternal Wisdom, and at the same time upon all created things, thereupon the Son is begotten, and is another Person from the Father. And because the Father looks on the same His Son by means of the same Wisdom, by this very means the Son is begotten without cessation. Moreover grant that the Father's nature ever remains productive, yet nevertheless, according to His Essence, the Son is unbegot-

ten. Since then there is the One Essence in the Three Divine Persons, therefore also Each of them is in Each. For where the nature is productive there the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son. But where the Father begets the Son, there the Son is of the Father. Finally where the Father looks upon His own Son, and at the same time upon all things in Him, there the Son is begotten. Yet herein nevertheless, there is none but one and the same Son by that productive nature. For neither by this generation whereby the Father begets His own Son does charity issue forth, which is the Holy Spirit. But where the Son was begotten by the Father another Person from the same, whilst the Father is beholding Him begotten, and in Him and together with Him, and One together with Him, in Whom is the life of all creatures, He looks upon all things at the same time. And again the Son beholds the Father begetting and productive, and His own self and all things in Him. From this mutual beholding, I say, in the same productive nature, Love proceeds, which is the Holy Spirit, the bond of

both, that is, of the Father and the Son. And this love embraces the Persons and penetrates Them, and causes Them to flow inwardly together again into unity, whereby the Father begets continually without cessation. But grant that They have reflowed inwardly together into unity, yet They are not able to remain on account of the productiveness of Their nature. And this begetting, and this reflowing into unity, is the working of the Holy Trinity ; and thus also is there the Trinity of Persons and the Unity of Nature. And by means of this Trinity the Adorable God brings about all His works. Moreover out of unity is the begetting and reflowing of Persons into the same, with measureless ardour of love and infinite desire and mutual complacency. But yet in the same unity They cannot tarry, for this unity is productive, and is the essence (or fount of properties) of the Persons ; and therefore, in that which is in accordance with this method of the divine way, it is supreme, and that which is below it is ignorant of the means. And by this reasoning the blessedness of God is not itself fruitful, since this

unity, of which we are now speaking, consists in the fruitfulness of nature; whereby it happens that therein is no lasting fruition, when the fruitful blessedness of God in that which is ignorant of the means, and in the unity of the Persons according to Their personal properties is placed by immersion or diffusion within the essence of God, which regards not the means. But yet when this loftiest nature is filled with eternal wisdom, goodness, generosity, benevolence, boundless love and compassion, the Omnipotent Father, turning Himself towards lower things, looks upon, rules, controls and orders reasonably and discreetly all things which He has established, and draws them by His compassion, rewards them generously, binds and joins them with love to Himself, and impresses into unity as many as are worthy on account of their virtues.

CHAPTER XXVI.

How they Resemble Christ, according to His Human Nature, who have Obtained at this step the Gift of Counsel; and Concerning the Threefold Kind of Men who Exhibit a Certain Likeness to the Most Holy Trinity and the Humanity of Christ.

Whosoever have obtained at this step this gift of divine Counsel perfectly, are even like Christ according to His human nature. Where it is to be noticed that there is a threefold class of men who bear a certain likeness to God the Most High Trinity, and to the most excellent humanity of Christ; the first are indeed like unto it naturally and imperfectly; others supernaturally and perfectly, yet each according to his own rank. The third are equally similar and blessed, each according to the excellence of his own merits. Of the first kind, whose likeness is

natural and imperfect, are all those who perform acts of virtue without the movement or impulse of the Holy Spirit, and without the love of God. Of this kind are those who perform good works with a bad or strange intention, as for instance, for the sake of temporal gain or some other reason than God; moreover also the infidels, or those who fight against and oppose in any point either the Catholic Church, the Sacraments, or the precepts; all those who bear or show before themselves a likeness however great, or however great soever the good works they do, cannot be perfectly like God without divine grace. And although by reason of leisure, avoidance and refusal of those occupations concerned with earthly affairs, and by reason of the acuteness and clearness of the natural intelligence, as also because of the essence of their own powers of mind they should so far attain introversion as to perceive the natural inclination of the mind towards its own chief cause, which is God, (for whatever has been created is dependent on its own proper cause, just as on its own proper rest), and likewise they

should impress themselves into their own essence by losing themselves and by doing nothing either externally or internally, that is, by neither loving nor knowing, all this would be nothing but loss of time, and herein are they evidently unlike God. For neither the Spirit of God nor divine love is at rest either in grace or in glory; and for that cause do they least of all, with regard to themselves, transcend or exceed it, but what they perceive is nothing else than a certain natural propension of theirs towards their beginning, God. But yet no one can perceive the taste of the divine fruition unless he is like Christ and the Holy Catholic Church, and is capable of being united by that likeness. And because men of that kind have by no means obtained a perfect likeness, they desire to rest in peace and quiet, but by acts of virtue they renounce it—those, that is, who look to and seek themselves throughout their entire life. For they think themselves lofty spirits, because they may taste their own fount of being, and perceive that which knows not the means; but if by the grace of God they should be driven out-

wardly to perform all acts of virtue in divine charity, and again should be drawn back inwardly by means of the impatience and the inrush of love, yet even by means of fruitful love they would be carried into the superessence of God, so as to taste it by a kind of divine means, then at length, in all virtues they would lead a life like Christ and His saints, and would resemble them in that which is conjoined with the means thereto, and without intermission, by means of the fruitful love, they will cleave to that which is ignorant of the means. Of the other kind are all those whose likeness is supernatural and perfect, according to the rank of each, whom divine grace and love move, so that they abstain from sins, perform the virtues, and consider God and the honour of God and their personal salvation. These are perfectly like Christ, nevertheless each in his own rank. For as far as they have more grace, and perform more acts of virtue, they are in every way more lofty and more like; nevertheless they remain ever alike in one rank, but are not one. Of the third kind are the blessed in glory, who them-

selves in the light of glory are like Christ, just as each have merited in the light of grace. When therefore Christ, in accordance with His humanity, was most perfectly like God in grace and divine gifts, He also in glory holds the most excelling likeness; since of His fulness have we all received, whatever now we are in grace, and shall be hereafter in glory. For He Himself without cessation by the operation of the Father, was urged from unity to all virtues, and to the needs, bodily as well as spiritual, of all men; and again from desire and love's impatience, flowed back again within. Nevertheless by reason of the Father's operation He was unable to repose in unity; indeed He who herein was and is still like unto the Most Holy Trinity, in regard to what things in themselves are fruitful, is neither able to persist in the unity of nature, or can remain in it. Herein therefore, I say, Christ was and is like the Holy Trinity, and ever had grace and now has glory in accordance with the measure of created capacity.

And in that self-same rank all good men, as in grace so in glory, bear the likeness of

God. Since all these are endowed with this likeness, they flow forth also into unity; nevertheless they cannot attain this unity wherein the Divine Persons occupy themselves. For this same unity of creatures is placed in its own foundation of powers in the height of the created way, and below the divine way. For the created way, or the way of creatures, is finite; but the way of the Divine Persons is boundless, and on that account the unity of creatures can neither touch the divine way nor the unity of the Persons by created light, since that unity of creatures is a kind of likeness of the divine unity. And that divine unity holds itself above that unity which is the cause that this very unity of creatures is bound by the impatience of love, because it is eternally compelled to remain the same, nor can it taste God in accordance with His own way. And this is the dignity and excellence of that rank. If in this rank within the created light, that is, either of grace or glory, a man knows and loves, therefore he cannot taste that unity wherein the Persons flow forth together with boundless wisdom

and love incomprehensible. For the saints in this rank, so in glory as in grace, ever remain like God; neither can glory or grace ever be so great as to become boundless.

But no one save with measureless love can avail to possess the unity of God, from which it follows that no one who is merely like God is able to apprehend or to attain to it, so as to remain like Him. But at this step we shall remain of necessity endlessly like Him; for life will always persist in eternal glory, nor will it ever be able to perish. Therefore whether it be in grace or in glory, in accordance with his own created measure, a man will have knowledge in the light of glory as of grace, which, as I have said, is the certain excellence or dignity of this step. For hence arises a hunger and impatience of love or desire, whereby it is neither allowed to attain or to taste the object of desire, in accordance with his measure, with full and perfect satisfaction. Moreover such a one established in grace or in glory possesses created unity by a certain singular method. For as far as each is gifted by God, and is settled in the virtues and divine love, even so

in this unity he tastes, perceives and experiences it. Nevertheless neither is this unity one, but each of those established in singular grace or glory hold in themselves unity and their own function in accordance with their own dignity or nobility.

But this unity is situated in the mind and in the form of all powers by means of the bond of love. And such a one in accordance with his own excellence or dignity, as far as he is divinely gifted, perceives himself to be so; and this is the personal unity of his own being, where each one soever is endowed more or less in accord with his own dignity. But the divine unity of the Persons binds itself together beyond all these unities, satisfying each one according to their own dignity, that is, by impelling them outwardly to the continual performing of all virtues, and inwardly drawing them into the efflux and impatience of love. And wherein each is more like the Holy Trinity by so much is he the more easily moved, and reflows within with greater love. But all this corresponds with the finished actions in grace as in glory; and by this means there

is a certain likeness to nothing else than the Most Holy Trinity. But without this likeness no one, either in time or in eternity, can ever be rendered one with God. But he who has perfectly followed after this likeness through the gift of divine Counsel, may suitably be compared to the firmament of heaven, inasmuch as he is touched by divine power, and is moved by an angel's goodness, and forsooth is as a mind seized by divine contact with the impatience of love. And as the illuminated reason, suffused with the rays of the Eternal Wisdom, enlightens the whole region of the mind, so the firmament and the wandering stars situated beneath it, especially the sun, bring light to all terrestrial things. And as all things live and increase by heat, which the firmament and the planets supply and yield to the lower created things, so man imparts and pours forth the warmth of love, compassion and pity of this very kind, and from thence all the powers of the mind live, work and grow in the virtues. But the firmament is adorned with seven planets and fixed stars beneath itself, by which all corporeal things which are under the firmament are ruled and illumined.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A Certain Mystical Application of the Seven Planets to the Soul

Now the planets have a certain likeness to the seven days in which all time revolves and is embraced; and amongst them the sun is the most effective and resplendent, just as also the clearest and most effective light of the mind which is inclined downward is the enlightened reason, which in the kingdom of the soul, makes the Lord's Day, which they call Sunday, and also makes the final days, disposing all the powers of the soul to rest, so that whatever it, that is the enlightened reason, may order, they may hear and perceive, and in accordance with its command, that is, in the whole time of this present life, they may dispose themselves. But another day of the week in which work has to be done is called Monday, which the self-same Moon,

that is, discretion adorns, who borrows her own light from the Sun of the enlightened reason, wherein the whole week, that is, may dispose itself temperately and discreetly all the time. For the Moon, that is discretion, is the earth's neighbour, whenever she controls the active life. But the Sun, that is the enlightened reason, holds a lofty position which indeed directs and orders the interior, affective life. Moreover Mars will adorn the third day of the week, that is humility and obedience in all things. Mercury will adorn the fourth day, that is charity and generosity. For now we are occupied with the middle of the week, that is, in the meantime in which work is to be done; if we waste time, it flows and escapes of itself, then when the eternal festival approaches we are idle and vain. Jupiter will adorn the fifth day, this is the affection drawn out and uplifted by loving and praising, in love towards God. For the festal day is approaching and is present at our gates, in which the Palace of the Eternal King is to be entered. The sixth day Venus will adorn, this is the divine touch which, just as the

star of Venus in the dawn, so it arises in the very origin and principle of all created action, that is, in the unity of the soul; and then the Sun scatters its own rays by which the illumined reason is indicated. But when this Lightbringer of the divine touch arises at dawn, the entire kingdom of the soul is gladdened, because that beam is seen to start forth and proceed from the changeless heaven of divine unity, and it happens the oftener when this star of Venus or Lightbringer, by the clearness of the Sun and the burning of charity is so transformed that it appears as though that which is loved is never to be possessed, for this happens at midday, when the acknowledged debt is discharged. For when we behold God's immensity and our own littleness, we both perceive and know that we owe much to God and to all men, how plainly we seem to fail in everything, and to afford satisfaction neither to God nor to men. For the love within us is immense, and the illumined reason shines exceedingly clearly. Therefore on account of our failing we decline into lowliness, and thus every debt can be dis-

charged. And this very star is called Vesper when it satisfies each and everyone by the illumined reason and by the burning of charity. And so far indeed the Sun has driven before itself this star (that is charity) of the illuminated reason, whilst it is called lightbringing, to the arousing of all the virtues : but after each one has been satisfied in proportion to its powers, then that very self-same star, (its name Vesper being taken for granted, that is charity,) follows after the Sun, desiring to repose endlessly in unity if only it can attain it. Finally Saturn will adorn the last, that is the seventh day of the week, by which we understand the unsatisfied craving, that is, hunger and impatience, because we are not worthy to apprehend God.

But Saturn, that is, that hunger, is placed in the uttermost summit of the affective power, and that is indeed a greater hungering which our deficiency in the virtues brings about, as to which we seem in these things to satisfy God least of all. For this hunger of which we are now treating craves for fruition ; but that other hunger vehemently

desires to arouse and to exercise the virtues. And this point, which we have now in hand, has respect to God, but the other to itself. Nevertheless either hunger is occupied in the same affection, but they are unequal in their action. That hungering, which we have said is signified by Saturn—angry and ireful planet—arouses in the kingdom of the soul lightnings and fearful thunderings, huge winds and storms. The lightnings, I should have said, are that contact which moves the soul to impatience, and reveals the Beloved in the open heaven of the mind, crowned with incomprehensible joys. Then the thunders are aroused, that is vehement surgings of love, because it is not allowed to gain the Beloved; which things stir great storms in the soul's kingdom, above and below; and were it not that the illumined reason, which God has annexed to this storm, restrained it, the kingdom of the soul could in no wise wait any longer for the banquet and the coming of the Betrothed. But the enlightened reason points out lucidly and clearly that the time will almost at once approach, in which it will be allowed, in pro-

portion to the desire of all its powers together with every delight and the highest joys, to be at rest in, enjoy, and possess the Beloved ; and this causes the loving soul to await Him patiently and calmly. Such, as in all the degrees now mentioned it has been set forth, should be the life of a man, if he wishes to attain to the superessential, that is, in a certain divine way, the contemplative life.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of what Kind He should be who wishes to Obtain the Gift of Counsel in an Excellent Degree, and of the Four Hindrances, and of the same Number of Expulsive Forces.

But in order that a man may be able to possess this divine gift of Counsel by the method which has been spoke of, it is necessary that he should have laid hold on the affective life, and should be sublimely lifted up and impressed and immersed into unity; whereupon it is then divinely touched, and with boundless impatience of love is driven again without. But then the reason is enlightened and it attempts again to re-enter within, to discover what may be the nature of that contact. But this engenders that surging of love which is unable to comprehend, and is itself the bond and fetter of love. Moreover the enlightened reason determines

to proceed downwards into the kingdom of the soul and to adorn all its powers with virtues in an excellent degree. Speed joins itself as its companion on the way, in order that it may be allowed the more quickly to arrive at sublime sensation or experience. But love and pity, since they are generous in outlay, desire to give satisfaction to all, and once more to flow back again to the heights. If anyone weigh these things well, he will find in them a certain similitude of the Most Holy Trinity. But there are four certain things which offer a hindrance, and provoke towards wandering hither and thither, and impede unity Not to perceive the divine touch—this causes a falling short of the sublime unity. For this cause the enlightened reason fails, which descended into the kingdom of the soul, and adorned it with virtues in an excellent degree. Quickness too, is deficient, and therefore strenuousness and perseverance are lacking. Finally love and pity are infrequent and tepid, whereby it happens that liberality is rendered small. To one who looks at these things thoroughly, it is possible to perceive easily, both out-

wardly and inwardly, that men of this kind are unlike the Most Blessed Trinity. I can mention indeed four other things which deceive a man, and prevent him from becoming blessed. He who occupies himself inordinately with external business, but is truly thence displeased with himself; for he loses hold of unity. It is agreed that he whose reason is blinded is dishonoured, for he lives in injustice. He has embraced sloth and idleness, activity and quickness having been cast off and lost; nor does he glow with any desire; he never gives any heed to love and pity, and therefore he is lacking in liberality and kindness.

These things having been observed, it is possible to infer from the matter itself and from his deeds, that such a one is far distant from salvation and happiness.

CHAPTER XXIX

Of a Certain Loftier Rank of the Gift of Counsel, and its more Distinguished Results.

But now let us see what of greater dignity and of more excellent virtues this gift of Counsel brings. The soul, whilst by divine contact, which is the origin of this gift, it is aroused and impelled to all the virtues by the Father's power, and by the clearness of the Son the reason having been illumined to know God in the way of a creature and in sublime clearness—, is enlightened by this contact and illumined reason, and an impatience of love is supplied to it by the Holy Ghost, which desire brings about, of tasting God in incomprehensible and measureless joys. And for this reason it obtains or engenders the likeness of the Most Excellent Trinity and fertile Unity. And were it possible to create any-

thing, God Himself might offer it, Himself only excluded; nevertheless it would remain impatient and uncalmed, and this because it has the likeness of God and aspires to fruitful union; and by means of that very likeness, as far as it is able to manifest it, it draws itself up into unity, which is the height of this likeness. Now here begins a certain loftier step of this likeness. For when all reasonable creatures, both angels and men, whom God has made like Himself either in grace or in glory by means of this likeness, have flowed forth into the unity of their own mind, and naturally in accordance with their own foundation are urged forward into the superessential being of God, as though into their own proper foundation, they then cleave to Him faithfully together with their collected and united powers. For the mind of one such as these turned inwards towards its own being, possesses itself not actively but essentially; and all essences come in contact with the simple essence of God, and in it perhaps depend on their own proper cause, nor here does any medium present itself but that they

are created ; for thus far, above action, they exist in essence, and every essence apart from the medium cleaves to the divine essence ; and even the Divine Persons themselves flow forth in unity, and both naturally, as fruitfully, cleave to the same essence ; so also the abyss of divinity keeps itself as a certain simple light—which is the essence itself—in the Unity of Persons, and also in that of any introverted mind, that is of any rational creature lightening towards its fruition. But the light which it illumines is the supreme unity of its own aspiring mind.

And this light incomprehensible, illumines the intelligence of the introverted mind, for it is that very Eternal Wisdom which is engendered in the mind. And in this light it may contemplate this simplicity whence itself is sprung, which is the divine nature. For not otherwise than in this light can the essence of the incomprehensible God be seen fruitfully. For that light is Christ, and He Himself is the door, by which not only a way is made by His humanity, but also by His divinity.

For not everyone is admitted within the

court of eternal fruition, except he live in accord with Christ's humanity, or following after the humanity of Christ and except through its boundless clearness he contemplate and reflow within. The simple light itself of this essence is henceforth illimitable, immeasurable and devoid of restriction, and it compasses and embraces the unity of the Divine Persons, and even of the soul itself and all the powers of the soul, and to such an extent that the natural propension and fruitful cleaving to God and all things which it holds to itself united in this light, it surrounds and illuminates; thus is brought about a single unity between God and loving souls. For all loving souls here consurge into unity beyond themselves, together with a certain boundless divine light. And because in this light knowing no limit, through which is brought about that immersion and inflow, all action, both of God and of all creatures, disappears. For in this essence of God no operation either of God or of any creature is apparent, since the Persons, in accordance with the personal qualities are drawn down as if absorbed into

fruition ; nevertheless they can never perish, since the Persons are eternal. For all this is brought about through the fruitful sinking or inclination into the boundless unity of the divine essence, which shuns all measure. Therefore God herein, together with all united to Himself, maintains a transformation of simple light, and here the soul sufficiently perceives that its Beloved has come, whilst it receives more in fruitful unity than even it was able to desire. And each one united to God perceives in this transformation joys incomprehensible and unspeakable fruition, although not all enjoy the same equal delight or felicity. For in proportion to each one's hunger, eagerness of love, and height of virtues, so each soever is surpassing, enlightened and superior. And notwithstanding, a certain common good is rendered to all ; yet when each one is an hungered and impatient for love, so then he is more and more penetrated and overwhelmed ; but nevertheless he is always superior to all things because those inexhaustible joys which they feel are henceforth boundless and illimitable. Even the

Lord Jesus Himself, as far as His created soul is concerned, is completely inundated by them. And more was rendered to His soul, when it was created, than it was indeed able to desire ; truly that good is boundless and infinite. Indeed divine charity, since it is a certain boundless quality, is able to love and to desire in a boundless manner. For those joys are free from limit, and have their being in the very essence of God. But the Persons, so far as they are Persons, work with a divine limit, but in accordance with Their essence they enjoy without limit. And here assuredly also are They inundated by that which is free from limit, that is, They have an infinite clearness, and perceive more than They are able to desire, that is, according to Their essence. And hence it happens that whosoever in this fruition are inundated, flow away from themselves in this light into an essence without limit. For that boundless light is free from limit in this fruition. For whilst thus they have flowed away from themselves into the illimitable essence, they possess now this infinite light nowhere, that is, they possess it

incomprehensibly, and this is their chief joy. And because through fruition by flowing away from themselves, they have lost themselves and God, or whatever knows no limit, and that they may possess incomprehensible delights, they in turn are possessed by God in the same essence free from limit. But in this limitless essence, all action, both of God and of creatures fails, since it is the fruition both of God and of all the saints, which is the fruitful inherence of God and of all loving spirits in the same simple essence. Therefore, as the Unity of the Persons in accordance with the beholding or introspection and fruitful inclination of the Persons themselves, is in enjoyment continually in the essences, as was said, even so that same Unity is fertile, and in it the Father begets the Eternal Wisdom without intermission. And also the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Begetter and the Begotten. And this is the operation of God. For He works without cessation, because pure action is in accordance with the fertility of His nature, and unless He acted, neither He Himself, nor any creature would exist either in Heaven or in earth. Ever therefore He

works and continually enjoys. And in this lofty unity of the divine nature, according to His own inclination to the essence of Himself, God fruitfully possesses Himself, and is fertile in the same unity, and in it the Father without intermission begets His own Son, who is the Eternal Wisdom. This unity is the throne of the Most Holy Trinity, and the victory of the Paternal Power; since between fruition and action the lofty nature of divinity possesses itself, continually and without interruption, both enjoying and acting. Further, by the Father's begetting, howsoever many either in grace or in glory are alike, are brought into contact in accordance with each one's worth or nobility, and all perform and work vital or living actions of virtue in accordance with the likeness of the Most Holy Trinity, and also without cessation cleave fruitfully to endless happiness. And these are they of whom the Lord says: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." For they have had mercy on themselves lest they might fail God in following after the virtues and a perfect life, or give too little satisfaction, and

also lest God should fail them with regard to the fruition of their own joys. These two, together with the divine goodness, are the cause whereby they have followed up the mercy of God even unto that inexhaustible fruition, and therein have flowed apart from themselves into the abyss of divinity, and are made the thrones and the repose of the Most High Trinity.

Whence also these angelical spirits who in this rank possess the kingdom of God, are called Thrones, because they also possess God, and in turn are possessed by God ; and these same are placed between action and fruition, are perfectly free on all sides, and amidst the heavenly spirits hold the seventh choir or order, which is the lowest of the third hierarchy ; but they excel all the remaining spirits of the six lower orders in clearness and sublimity. And whosoever have followed up these things we have mentioned, through the gift of God and the performance of the virtues, whether in grace or glory, they are all Thrones, inasmuch as they possess God by fruitful cleaving in the superessence of God, and by

Him are possessed in turn as though His proper Thrones and repose, although they are one in the simple fruition of this essence apart from perceptible difference. And moreover, in this simple unity of the divine essence, there is no knowledge nor desire, nor action, seeing that there is a certain abyss without limit, which the active comprehension is unable to follow up or to apprehend. And therefore Christ besought the Father that we also might be made one, as He is one with the Father, that is, by fruitful love and immersion or absorption into a darkness without limit, where the action both of God and of all creatures is lost and absorbed. Indeed whoever has obtained this gift of counsel so perfectly, is able rightly to be likened to the firmament adorned with stars. And also by the movement of the firmament and wandering planets and the stars, all created things in the earth, the waters, and the air, live and grow, and the highest portion of the firmament holds itself passively under the influence of the Prime Moveable and the impulse of angelic and divine virtue, and

thus continually acts in accordance with its own lowest position, and is acted upon in accordance with the highest.

CHAPTER XXX.

That this Rank of the Gift of Counsel may be Possessed in the Highest Perfection; and Concerning Four of its Hindrances and Exterminations of the Same Number.

But that anyone may possess this gift of Divine Counsel in the highest perfection, it is necessary that he should have obtained the likeness of God, and have been carried away through love, cleaving to the super-essential being of God. Those who bend and project themselves into this super-substantial essence await nothing save fruition; these self-same persons too, receive the simple light with immense joy in virtue of unity; thus also, without any weariness, they are able to be carried away and absorbed into the simplicity of that very light, where then they determine to dwell in that most remote losing of self, nor

thence ever to return. And here the most joy-giving Trinity together with all Its friends, wishes to repose in them. Thus indeed shall we, without any imperfection, hasten unto and stand before the super-substantial essence of God; and ever descending again to the lower regions, we shall arrange and guide the kingdom of the soul by means of the virtues into the likeness of God. But there are four certain things specially hindering fruition. Those in whom there is small desire and do not cleave firmly enough to the superessence of God, or are uncertainly balanced in the superessence of God, whereby it happens that they neither will be illumined by the light of God, nor are touched by the boundless essence of God, but are at a stand-still, and continue in themselves. And because they fall from this light they are unable to desire eagerly and to hasten thither where they deeply lose themselves. But whilst they do not this, they are neither consumed nor absorbed by the source of happiness. Finally, there are four other things which spoil or even remove the virtues. Those who

occupy themselves externally and seek their own praise and honour are farthest off from unity. Therefore they experience not the simple light of eternal wisdom in their wretched and desolate being; nor indeed have they even risen again, but lie in a certain sloth and idleness, and seek repose in themselves and in creatures. For if they should desire to drive away all idleness, now in any case they would be able to strive and contend again, and to taste and perceive the touch of God, and to possess a blessed eternity.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Concerning the Gift of Understanding.

The sixth gift of the Holy Spirit splendidly adorning the soul is Understanding. For when anyone has perceived the inward touch of the Father, and has been illumined according to the reason by the Son, and has been enkindled with the impatience of love by the Holy Spirit, then indeed he has obtained the perfect likeness of God; but none the less is he able to grow continually in virtues and a greater likeness. For not only is he able to merit so that God can endow him far more liberally, nor can he be so clear and enlightened in intellect but that he can be made more enlightened by God; nor finally can he be so endowed with love but that God can pour a greater into him. Yet as we have said, by the inward touch of God and the enlightened reason and the ardour of love, he is perfectly like God.

Moreover, since according to his soul he was created out of nothing, because God nowhere has accepted that very nothingness which is nowhere, a man following on, has flowed apart from his own self to such an extent that he has lost himself, and that by immersion in the simple essence of God as if in his own proper constitution, and is dead in God. For to die in the Lord is to be blessed; but in this way are each blessed in proportion to their own dignity or excellence each one of which is unlike as possible as in grace so in glory. And their blessedness is to comprehend God and to be comprehended of God in the fruitful unity of the divine Persons, and by this very unity to have flowed into the superessence of God. Now when this unity, in accordance with introversion and inward emanation is fruitful, and in accordance with extroversion or exterior flowing forth, is fertile, therefore the source itself of unity flows whilst the Father begets the Son, the Eternal Truth, who is the Father's image, in which He recognises Himself and all things. And the same image is the life and cause of all things, since in it by some divine mode all

things live. And by this image all things are perfectly created, and by the same exemplar all things are wisely ordered ; and by reason of this image all things are fitted and joined to their end, as far indeed as it pertains to God. For to each reasonable creature whatsoever enough has been offered so that it should be able to obtain beatitude. For the reasonable creature itself, since it is a creature which has issued forth from God, is not that image of the Father, seeing that it flows forth as a creature, and therefore the knowledge and love of Him has its measure both in the light of grace as of glory. For not anyone actively possesses the divine nature in a divine manner, but only the divine Persons. For no creature is able to work in a boundless manner ; for if its action should be boundless assuredly it would be God and not a creature, for by His own image God made reasonable creatures in accordance with nature, like Himself ; but those who have turned themselves to Him He has made more like Himself above their nature in the light of grace or glory, each in accordance with his capacity, condition and dignity.

For as many soever as feel within the divine touch have their reason illuminated, and are endowed with the impatience of love, and to whom the boundless essence of divinity was manifested,—all these are introverted fruitfully in the superessence of God. And God Himself cleaves to His own fruitful essence, and contemplates that same essence which He enjoys. The divine light in fruition continually passes away in its own boundless essence; but in strong contemplation the vision does not fail nor pass off, for we shall always be contemplating that which we are enjoying. But those who without intermission are wanting in that very light, are those who in the vastest solitude of divinity repose fruitfully, where God fruitfully possesses Himself. There, I say, the light fails in the repose and the boundless essence of God; and in this loftiest essence God is His own throne; and howsoever many occupy this rank in grace and glory are the thrones and tabernacles of God, and are dead in God, and enjoy eternal repose. Out of this death issues forth the superessential life, which is the

contemplative life, and here begins the gift of Understanding. Therefore when God ceaselessly contemplates the same essence which He enjoys, He bestows, as it were, an impatience of love, whilst He makes them like Himself; thus He supplies rest and fruition to those whom He conjoins and unites to Himself. Moreover, immersed and absorbed into that essence, they know neither giving nor receiving. And God assigns likewise, as it were, an illumined reason, whilst He bestows likeness to Himself: thus He offers an immense clearness when He admits to union with Himself. And this immense clearness is the image of the Father, in which image we have been created, and we are able to be united to Him more surpassingly and supremely than even the Thrones themselves, if notwithstanding we contemplate (beyond the defect of which we have spoken), the glorious face of the Father, that is, the loftiest nature of divinity.

Moreover that immense and boundless clearness is bestowed in common on all minds enjoying it in grace and glory; and this, like light or solar clearness,

communicates itself, or flows in common to all; but not all who receive it are equally illuminated. But as the sun's rays penetrate glass more brilliantly than stone, and crystal than glass, and as single gems in the sun's brilliance manifest their own worth, excellence, nobility and colour, so by this clearness of God each one is illuminated in proportion to the dignity or excellence of his own capacity, both in grace as in glory. But nevertheless he who is greatest and chief of all in grace has been less illuminated than the least in the light of glory, although the light of glory may not be the medium between the soul and this boundless clearness. But our state and condition, and in like manner, time and change, are a hindrance to us; and therefore we indeed merit it least of all, but only those who are in glory. Besides that sublime clearness there is the simple contemplation of God the Father, as of all those who fruitfully contemplate and bend the sharpness of the mind in the one and together with the one self-same incomprehensible light,—each one indeed is accordingly illuminated—since that unex-

hausted and infinite light shines without intermission in all minds; but he who even now leads this temporal life is often besprinkled with similitudes, and thus does not always actually contemplate intently by this light the superessential substance of God. Nevertheless he obtains it in accordance with his state, for each one has followed up this gift of understanding, and when he desires he can be free to attend to contemplation of this kind, as far as is possible in this life. However when this light by which we contemplate is boundless, and that which we contemplate is a certain indeterminate and infinite abyss, for this reason they cannot ever be apprehended in turn by themselves; but fixed contemplation is always most sublimely occupied in the boundless essence of divinity, and in the fruitful countenance of Majesty, where the Father Himself by His own wisdom and unexhausted and infinite essence contemplates by this method.

Moreover as many as wisdom has overflowed and illuminated are called Cherubim, because they belong to the order of angelical spirits of that name, and to this end they are

free for all eternity, nevertheless each one in accordance with his own excellence and dignity; for all are not equally illuminated. However they never attain as far as a similitude, nor do they fall from the virtues, nor do they desert any creature, and so they bend their sharpness of mind beyond this similitude without cessation into the simple essence of divinity. And Almighty God Himself, Who is the Author and Controller of this contemplation, contemplates and acts without any cessation. For Christ in accordance with His own Humanity and created Soul, both was and is the highest contemplative of all that have ever been; since He was one with the Eternal Wisdom—nay, He was and is the Wisdom through which contemplation is made. But none the less He Himself ever satisfied by ministering outward duties and actions of charity to all mortals, and without interruption beholds the Father's face; and this is the excellence and dignity of this gift, that is to be active and to contemplate, and ever to remain free from all impediment, as far indeed as can be done.

And to those who are of this character the words of Christ belong, in which He says :— "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." For when they are besprinkled by no shadows and similitudes, and neglect bodily things, and estimate pleasures lightly, and have obtained that likeness of God which is in accordance with the virtues and justice, and also openly contemplate without limit the essence of God, deservedly they are called blessed, since this is divine or deifying contemplation. Quite rightly even can they be compared to the middle heaven, which is called the crystalline; seeing that as this crystalline heaven is illumined by the highest heaven, so they, by the Father's eternal truth, are illumined and irradiated through and through. That indeed as we have said, is the contemplative, superessential life where the introverted.intelligence is adorned by the gift of understanding, both by God Himself, and by the very Eternal Wisdom Itself.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Of what kind he ought to be who should be endowed with the Gift of Understanding: and of four things which hinder him, and of the same number of things which exclude him.

Now that this gift can be possessed by man, and he in turn by it, it must needs be that he may be endowed with these four things. He who desires to be enlightened will be bound to pass beyond and be carried away into the superessential substance of God. For thence in the simplicity of the deep itself he will experience the boundless light of God, and thus he will be penetrated entirely by the light of truth, inundated and recreated. For this light generally pours forth its own rays upon all the pure and enlightened, in accordance with the dignity of each one; and relying upon it, they have power to bend the sharp-

ness of the mind without intermission upon the fruitful countenance of God, and to contemplate it. For they will ever most faithfully contemplate that which they enjoy, they themselves having been lost very far away. For when the Beloved shall have departed to a distance, this very thing causes the mind's eyes to incline to the supreme happiness continually. Nevertheless in the meantime the Beloved is held and possessed by the beloved in the unity of the divine solitude. And thus shall we ever remain, and our life will continually be in a state of desire before the abyss of the highest. There are four other things which if they are well considered, will be seen to hinder the gift of Understanding; those who always meditate with closed eyes, so that they can enjoy the superessential substance of God have no power to be enlightened, because they do not incline to the simplicity of the divine light. And this is to them a hindrance, so that they are unable as do the Cherubim, to know the Beloved so excellently: they desire indeed to search into the countenance of

the divine majesty, but fail on account of this very thing. Finally there are four other things which can be mentioned, and which exclude the gift of Understanding. He who seeks for the taste and delights of earthly things is unable to attain to the surpassing fruition of God. In neither is he capable of the divine illumination, since he is oppressed and laden with the shadows of transient things. And scarcely even will he be able to rise up again because snatching at the joys of meat and drink, he leads a life given up and devoted to gluttony. These things, as I have said, ruin a man and deprive him of eternal happiness.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Of the Gift of Wisdom.

The seventh gift of the Holy Spirit is sweet savoured Wisdom, which is attained on the supreme summit of the introverted mind, and penetrates the intellect and the will, in so far as they betake themselves within to the very apex of the mind. That Wisdom or savour is immeasurable, and inexhaustible, and flows forth outwardly from the innermost, penetrating the body itself and the mind as the singular powers are capable of, as far as the remotest sense, that is to feel even the bodily touch. Other senses, to wit, seeing and hearing, receive their delighting outwardly from the marvellous and stupendous creation of things, which God, the Artificer of the world has established to His own honour and the necessary uses of men. For this incomprehensible taste beyond the mind is indeed boundless in the space or vastness

of the soul, and here is the Holy Spirit Himself, the incomprehensible love of God. But beneath the mind it is limited and bounded, but because the powers are suspended and inherent they therefore all surge back and overflow. Moreover since the Eternal Father has adorned the introverted mind with the fruition of unity, He has also distinguished it in order that He may both embrace it and it may be embraced in the casting away of its very self, and be the throne and the rest of God. For the Son the Eternal Truth itself, has adorned the introverted understanding with the very clearness of His Own Self, that he who enjoys what is of Him, may gaze upon His Face, for the Holy Spirit Himself has determined to adorn the introverted will from time to time, and the suspended and inherent unity of its powers, whereby the soul may taste, perceive and experience how good God is. And this taste is so immense and boundless that to the soul which perceives Him, the heaven and earth, and whatsoever in them is seem to melt and to be reduced to nothing before His immensity. For the joys of this taste, above and below,

are perceived outwardly and beyond, and have embraced and penetrated the entire kingdom of the mind. Therefore the understanding contemplates this simplicity whence all these delights flow forth. And hence arises the consideration of the enlightened reason; although it knows these things full well—that it is not able to understand and to know these incomprehensible joys, since indeed it considers them by a created light; but that joy is boundless; and thus it happens that the reason itself fails in its own consideration. Moreover the understanding, transformed by this boundless clearness, contemplates without intermission these incomprehensible joys of blessedness, and upon these it fixes and bends its own glances.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

That the Enlightened Reason may Contemplate God in Intellectual Images and Divine Effects.

But the reason of the creature, according to its manner, attentively speculates a great deal as it were in reasonable or intellectual images; and by the effects or impulses emerging from infinite divinity restores and enlivens itself. It perceives therefore, its own Beloved of so great a magnitude that in accordance to its own manner it cannot ever be comprehended either by itself, that is the reason, or by any creature. So lofty is it that none can ever in the manner of a creature apprehend or gain it; so simple, that each multitude or multiplicity may take its beginning and end in it. It perceives, too, that it is the Beauty which adorns heaven and earth, the Bounty from which all things have flowed forth, and in

which they essentially persist: the Glory and Integrity of heaven, of earth, and of all creatures; the Life in which all things live, whatever have been or will be made; the Victory which overcomes all things; the Crown of all lovers; the Health which having gained, he will henceforth enjoy in perpetual well-being and safety; the Peace in which all lovers repose; the Security which can never be wanting to him who has possessed it; the Blessedness which supplies fruition; the Consolation whereby those afflicted are uplifted; the Sweetness penetrating all who are eager for it; the Joy in which lovers boast; the Fount and Source of Gladness in which those who enjoy it become dissolved; the Jubilee, that is the joy which cannot be explained in words, in which senses and powers fail; the Reward for which all strain; the Pleasure which never allows a man to be seared; the Ardour or Fervour, which desires to enkindle all lovers and to consume them; the Power which is able to restrain and command all things; the Divinity which can fill all things; the Eternity whereby all temporal

things were made; the Goodness which is prepared to bestow all things; the Benevolence or Liberality which penetrates and flows through heaven, earth and all things; the Boundless Charity which strives to unite to itself all who are desirous of the virtues; the Excellence and Nobility which have ordered all things decently and succinctly; the Purity to which naught that is false, nothing unrighteous can be united; the Fruitfulness by which the firmament is moved, and thus all corporeal things naturally live and increase; by which in like manner all divine gifts and spiritual matters are supernaturally conferred on all lovers of God, and in the glory of blessedness eternal life and fruition are supplied. The Virtue and Power to which nothing is impossible; the Wisdom which knows how to adorn, control, rule and order all things; the Stability which waits for sinners that they may grow wise again, and for the just that they may be crowned; the Fidelity which never deserted anyone; the Truth to which the hearts of all are clear; the Sanctity which frees and cleanses a man from earthly

things; the Heat setting a man aflame in all the virtues; the Light which renders all the virtues manifest; the Fulness which in those who through the virtues are similar to it, brings about perpetual hunger, but to those who are united to it, it is bestowed in far greater measure than can be desired; the Fortitude, which knows how to raise and carry a man above all things; the Justice which will condemn others in accordance with their actions, and which will bestow the reward of eternal life on others; the Purity which on the last Day of Judgment will reject all the impure, and will conjoin with itself all the pure and clean in the happiest union; all these things, I say, the illumined reason considers in the infinite divinity, which indeed are rational or intellectual images, in the manner of a creature sought and drawn out of the simple essence of divinity. And as far as the reason comprehends them, so far are they created, and are certain similitudes drawn from the divine nature. But because all, in accordance with that which they inwardly behold, begin in an abysmal or boundless essence and end

at the same, here their reason and reflection fail, since here they are the simple essence of God. In this manner therefore, the enlightened reason is wont to contemplate its Beloved in all the now enumerated excellences, and thence is seized with admiration of all this wealth, at the same time perceiving that it possesses all these things which we have mentioned, above all of its own, that is, the laying hold of the reason. This matter nevertheless, arouses in the mind longing and impatience, so that it is compelled to gaze and bend towards the simplicity of light, where it refreshes and consoles the impatient longing desirous of fruition.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Certain things Worthy of Mark concerning the Holy Spirit.

Also in this intention of mind, apart from perception, it contemplates, and all the rivers of divinity flow forth into the highest part of the soul's kingdom, whence the whole kingdom of the soul is inflamed and looms with a great fire, which is the Holy Spirit, flaming in the furnace of the divine unity ; in which excellent unity an incomprehensible love flows through all spirits and illuminates them. This fruitful unity is truly a treasure, hid in the field of the soul which, who finds by digging, and when found takes, he sells and abandons himself and all things in order that he may possess this field, that is, these delights. And the Holy Spirit of God is the treasure of the soul since He is the bond, and embrace and penetration of love, penetrating and embracing all intro-

verted spirits in fruitful unity. And in the same way is He charity, which makes His lovers to fail and to be consumed with a tide of love. He Himself is the Finger of God, Who founded heaven, earth, and all creatures according to their nature. Moreover each of those who turn themselves above nature to Him He has rewarded in accordance with their dignity, and with His own self all these whom He has endowed with gifts, He has conjoined and united. Moveover, He is a most vast ocean wherefrom all good things have flowed forth. Yet nevertheless innumerable and boundless good things have remained in Him. He is a burning and brilliant Sun Divine, who has adorned the kingdom of the soul with those seven principal and supernatural rays that are His own seven sublime gifts. He again is a boundless Fire, wherein all introverted spirits are transformed and illumined in grace and glory, liquefied in the furnace of divine unity like unto gold, each enjoying and tasting God in accordance with their condition and dignity, notwithstanding that this divine Fire burns indiscriminately; but because

different metals—say copper, lead, iron, tin, silver and gold in this incomprehensible fire at the same time are fused together into one, and the several metals, that is the several spirits perceive, feel and suffer the transformation of the essential love of God in accordance with the proper excellence, nobility and dignity of these things, although that very love itself may flow forth in common, thence arises the distinction or difference of the fruition. Further that love, inexhaustible and infinite in accordance with fruition is essential, not active ; for through the overflowing of this essential charity, the Father and the Son and all spirits cleaving to Them have flowed forth and are inundated above action into fruition ; and through the flowing forth of the selfsame charity from the Father and the Son, all virtues are achieved in all creatures, and completed. Thus therefore divine charity is active in accordance with its emanation, urging and arousing a man to the cultivation of all the virtues. But as far as it flows within, it is essential, inundating all united to itself by a certain incomprehensible taste. This is therefore an

immense abyss, to which all distinguished minds belong by fruition ; and in which they are plunged by the love of their own selves. That is the splendid Sun, which radiating and flaming in the highest summit of the soul, draws again the intellect into contemplation and enlightenment, and makes it without fail to bend its way to eternity. That is the living and inexhaustible fountain, which from the innermost flows forth with seven chief streams which are the seven gifts, fertilising the kingdom of the soul with all the virtues. Moreover the distinguished spirits having followed up this living and gushing streamlet to its vital source, whence that fountain derives its origin, thereupon flow forth and are inundated from clearness to clearness, and from joys to joys. For there the honeyed drops of ineffable joys distil, which make them dissolve and flow forth in the raptures of divine blessedness. And these are the Seraphs, loftiest and supreme spirits of the age-long kingdom, burning and melting in the gaze of the fruitful, divine unity. And whosoever obtain this gift of divine wisdom for this reason, are like these seraphic spirits, each in

accordance with his own enlightening and clearness. For these is also a difference of clearness in seraphic spirits, of love and fruition; so that all spirits both in grace and glory differ and are distinguished by knowledge, by love and by taste. But he who obtains the lowest rank in the light of glory, knows love, and tastes and experiences more joys than he who excels most in grace. And though God may communicate and bestow these joys indiscriminately and equally, yet those who perceive them are unequal. Meanwhile nevertheless as far as they enjoy unity, they all superabound. But where they have lost themselves in that darkness of divine solitude there remains nothing left, nor is there anything beyond; since there is no giving or receiving, but a merely simple essence in which God and those like God are both united, immersed and have lost themselves: nor are they ever able to find themselves in this boundless essence, since there is in the same place a certain pure and most simple simplicity, and this is the chief and highest beatitude of the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless those who on earth

are like these seraphic spirits, are compelled to submit themselves and to descend to acts of charity and the carrying out of all the virtues. For as they are loftier and more distinguished so also they are more compassionate for all in their wealth or needs, whether bodily or spiritual. And God Himself indeed enjoys His Own Self beyond all the saints in a boundless fashion, seeing that His introversion is without foundation, and His essence allows of no limit. For unless His essence were without experience of this limit it would not there be perfect fruition, but in that selfsame limitless essence the action of the Persons ceases. Therefore God enjoys beyond all created spirits, who have deeply attained excellence and gifts, by a fixed definite measure; but nevertheless He Himself with all His gifts, both spiritual and corporal, flows forth actively both in heaven and earth. Christ even in accordance with His own created soul, both was and is the highest and chief contemplative and lover of all who have ever existed, and most enjoys fruition beyond all. But that is in accordance with His own divinity

which we enjoy. Nevertheless He never failed anyone, for neither will He ever fail: since none the less He offers Himself in common to all who desire Him. But those who desire Him not, undoubtedly He grieves over their change, and He prays the Father for all and to the Same He offers Himself and His entire Passion. Thus in the same way, however many are the highest saints on the heavenly Thrones, who when they were on earth were courteous to all, even are now in that Supernal Kingdom, and are praying and entreating for us. The most high seraphs also, and whosoever belong to their rank, as on earth, so in heaven pray much more ardently and desire than those of other ranks: truly those are they who know more clearly and love more ardently, and therefore also are more courteous, and more keenly thirst and desire the honour of God and the salvation of men: and to those who are like them, those words of Christ apply when He says:—"Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God." For these lofty spirits have made peace with God, together with all their powers, and with all creatures, and

they have adorned and ordered all things, each in its own dignity and nobility; and they possess in true peace the Kingdom of God, withdrawn into the abyss of the divine unity or simplicity. And this is the supreme excellence of that Kingdom and of eternal blessedness. And for this reason this kingdom is not unfittingly likened to the supreme heaven, which is a certain pure and simple clearness, the immutable origin and beginning of all corporal things, and the created and corporal kingdom of God and of all the Saints. These are the right ways therefore whereby the Lord hath led the just through straight paths into a certain perpetual peace and tranquillity. And thus now at length the four out of the five principal parts are completed by us.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

That the Gift of Wisdom is Excellently Possessed, and what Things Hinder it, and what forthwith they Eliminate.

Further, whosoever desires to possess in an excellent manner this chief and supreme gift of Wisdom, in order that boundless love might penetrate him within; and that the taste or relish before mentioned might inundate him, he must needs regard the operation flowing even brightly and clearly out of the simplicity of the divine source. But thence is engendered an admiration of the multifarious gifts and incomprehensible riches of God. But admiration causes one to long and eagerly to strain after the loftiest fruition. But then he must needs intently press upon contemplation and renew and refresh affection or longing, above every action. And that very boundless love in the

furnace of unity flames and burns in all the senses, and it causes a man wholly to melt, flow down, and be immersed in the delights of fruition. And thus imbued, a man, by flowing in the abyss of boundless divinity, loses himself in the darkness of divine solitude. For here nothing is given or received, or is free from the exercise of love, but there is a certain pure and simple unity. There are four certain things which hinder the tasting of wisdom. To contemplate apart from the consideration of action emanating from unity, hinders this taste. Those who are not elevated by admiration are less fervent from desire arising out of the upspringing impatience of love, and the boundless love in the highest part of the kingdom of their soul burns less deeply within. And because they apply the acuteness of the mind to nakedness, nor are drawn and absorbed by reason of the tide of love, it in any case hinders the obtaining of the highest purity and offers an impediment. There are four other things which deprive a man of health and happiness. Men unstable and blind prowl and wander hither and thither for the

obtaining of foreign and external delights. They take note of certain worthless and wretched things, and pay attention to gains, and repose in the lowest matters. Perverse and unrighteous love maddens their wretched senses, and blinds their reason. They seek and strive after a foreign taste or relish, and therefore are unable to reach the point whence eternal joys are flowing. Finally that which so greatly restrains from the gaining of eternal light is a life unclean and unchaste.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Of the Five-Fold Kingdom of God and of the First Sensible Kingdom, and what are the Future Things at the Last Judgment.

Finally the fifth, and in the same way the last of those things of which we are treating in this book, is the same of which the wise man speaks: "And he showed to him the Kingdom of God." For where anyone has obtained and possessed all the gifts of God before mentioned and explained, in a sublime and excellent degree, to him now is shown the Kingdom of God in a five-fold manner. Since the external, sensible kingdom is shown to him, in the same way too the natural kingdom, the kingdom of scripture, the kingdom of grace above nature and scripture, and finally the divine kingdom above grace and glory are also shown. For to have all these things clearly and lucidly known

and ascertained, is called common life. And concerning the outward sensible kingdom, that is the four elements, and the three superior elements of Heaven, and how God has adorned them from the beginning, has been explained. But how, after the last resurrection both those things, as also human bodies, are to be divinely adorned, we shall now explain. In the last day fire will pervade and penetrate all those things which are on earth, and will thoroughly consume and burn them up. And here the fire will be fourfold, that is to say, Tartarean, Purgatorial, Elementary, and Material. The Tartarean will burn up the souls of the lost; the Purgatorial, good men from their daily sins, and will purge them from every debt; the Elementary will repurge and renew the very elements, and will render them subtile; finally the Material will burn up whatever there is on earth, and will also reduce men's very bodies to dust. Then at once Christ, the Judge of the whole world will appear, and will command all the dead to rise again and to stand at His judgment seat with mind and body, and then

at the right hand of God Omnipotent on the very day of judgment soul and body will be joined once more. All the good will appear with immense clearness and the damned with excessive deformity. Moreover judgment will be delivered in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, because that place, known to all, is as it were situated in the centre of the earth, and because Christ suffered and died not far therefrom. Christ with all His saints will be in the air; the wicked, with the weight of their sins, will abide heavily upon the earth. The sentence to be carried out against the damned will be: "Depart ye cursed into eternal fire," than which nothing more terrible is to be heard. But to the good the Lord will say: "Come"—which is a loving expression—"ye blessed"—which is a more loving expression"—inherit the kingdom"—which no one will unwillingly hear—"of my Father"—which savours still more sweetly—"prepared for you from the foundation of the world," which causes eternal praise and thanksgiving, because the elect have been before created. Moreover at the same time

when judgment shall have been completed, and the damned plunged into Tartarus, heaven and the elements will be restored. For the fire which we have mentioned will be so great that it will reduce to ashes and dust everything which it finds on earth. For by fire Almighty God will purge the elements and will present them renewed by clearness and subtilty, and will restore them more exquisite in form than they were before. For since those very elements have been defiled by the crimes and sins of men, it is necessary that they should be purged again by fire. But when they have done service to good men, it must needs be that they obtain clearness and subtilty as though by way of reward, and even partly for this reason, that this world may gain a certain similitude of the glorious bodies, and that blessed men may contemplate in accordance with their external senses the loveliness of heaven and earth. But the highest part of nature, that is to say, the heavens and the planets, because they are far distant from the earth, are pure and unmixed, and therefore need no purgation, but

will remain immoveable and will gain greater clearness. And this is their transition and renewal; the sun will occupy the east, and the moon the west, where they have been established. Indeed the heavens and the planets have been created for the use of men for a double reason. In the first place because men and all corporeal creatures are generated, live and increase by the movement and influence of the heavens. But because then there will be no mortal creature, the movement of the heavens will sink to rest. In the second place on account of their own beauty and clearness, which will then be much increased, but the earth will be clear as crystal and spreading as a palm. Water will be purer than now it is and clearer, and there will remain to it, not to say its substance, but its own species. Air will have more light, since the sun and the moon and the stars will be clearer by sevenfold than now they are, nor will there be henceforth clouds or hailstorms, or winds, or thunderbolts, or thunderings; it shall cease to be night there, with perpetual day succeeding day, and light or clearness in

earth as it is in heaven. Moreover whatever is dense and obscure on earth, or is cold in the waves, or in fire possesses the power of burning, shall all descend into Tartarus.

Furthermore the transparency of the waters and of the air, and the splendour of fire, each in its own sphere, shall remain even increased in greater clearness or light. Thus therefore, heaven and earth shall indeed pass away, but shall not wholly perish, nay rather they shall be the more excellently renewed. And this is the external, sensible Kingdom of God and of all His saints, and the glorious bodies of the blessed shall possess it with endless joy.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Of the Four Gifts of Glorified Bodies.

Moreover souls separated from mortal bodies which have bestowed upon them many hindrances and burdens, hold themselves to be in a more perfect condition than when joined to them. But where souls have possession of their own glorified bodies, they will now be to them neither a hindrance, nor burden nor torment, but rather endless joy. Moreover in order that a body may bestow joy in the soul, but not to be as an impediment to it in actions of blessedness or in works of glory, it must needs be endowed with four gifts. The first gift is Clearness. For the element of water will be glorified in bodies that are blessed, and therefore will be perspicuous and clear; moreover even at the same time they will be possessed by a spirit, lustrous and glorious. And because the glorified body will be per-

spicuous and transparent, the glory of the soul will diffuse itself through it, and thus will be more lustrous than the sun by sevenfold. Nevertheless not all the bodies of the blessed will shine with equal clearness. For by how much the end of each is nobler, more lustrous and clear by so much even will the body shine with a greater light. And as star differs from star in clearness, so also in eternal life greater will be the difference, in proportion to the merits of each, of the glorified bodies. The bodies of those infants or children who died before they are partakers of reason, can be likened to the moon's splendour. For they have not within themselves any light of their own proper merits, but from the glorious sun, that is Christ's death and His merits, they borrow and accept their own brightness. Another gift is Impassibility. For the glorified bodies will have in themselves the element of earth, firm and strong by glorification, in order that so they may not be able to suffer. For thenceforward neither the elements between themselves nor in blessed men will be contrary, whence it happens that these bodies

are impassible. Thirdly the glorified soul will possess its own proper and the same blessed body; on that account such a body can suffer from nothing. Adam indeed, first formed before he had allowed sin within himself, suffered in nothing; and so long as that condition lasted was unable to suffer. Nevertheless the sin having been committed he was passible, and could suffer,—a thing which the matter itself has proved. But children who die without experience of the saving font, and without actual sins, suffer not indeed in Limbus, but this not by reason of the power of resisting outward offence, which they do not possess; for they are not blessed but by the divine mercy. Indeed the glorified bodies of the Saints, even though they should be placed in hell, or under the earth, or in the deep of the sea, would be able to suffer no trouble or grief. The third gift of glorified bodies is Subtilty, which they will receive from the element of fire glorified in themselves, whereby even their own bodies will be rendered so exceedingly subtile that nothing will be able to resist them, and nothing can offer a barrier or

hindrance. Beyond this even noble souls will possess their bodies in a subtilty of this kind, and having been conquered and tamed beforehand by themselves, and brought to such subtilty, all grossness having been removed, they will be conjoined afresh. Finally the fourth gift is Agility, which they will obtain from the element of air, as an ornament in themselves. For if it behoves a body to be glorified, it must needs be rid of every burdensome weight. And thus the blessed soul, with its own glorified body, will be wherever it wishes in the briefest point of time. But just as the clearness of blessed bodies will not be equal, so also their Agility will be unequal. And these are the gifts of glorified bodies, with which after the resurrection they will be endowed. For these even the Lord Jesus is understood to have shown in His own mortal body. Clearness in His Transfiguration; Impassibility when He transformed Himself into food the night before He suffered, with intense desire and exultation, and without any anguish, which nevertheless is to be understood in accordance with His action, not in accordance with His

condition; Subtilty in being born without any pain of an untroubled Virgin; Agility in walking upon the sea. The glorified bodies will have in addition a singular joy in the kingdom of God both in seeing and hearing. For they will see with their bodily eyes the glorified body of the Lord the Saviour Himself and of His ever to be venerated Mother the Virgin Mary, and in the same way the rest of the distinguished bodies of all the saints, full of glory and of celestial delights. They will behold even as an ornament the exceeding clearness of the heavens and the elements, and within an hour they will wander over heaven and earth, and will again return to the heavens. For this, with songs and in whatsoever ways they are able, and with every faculty they will together praise their God and Lord, where the sound most grateful and sweet will leap far to His ears; and with these gifts will they ever in every age be at leisure. Further the glory of souls will overflow upon all the bodily powers of the soul, and through them penetrate as far as the external sense itself, which will abound with such joys, that by no one could it be

believed that it were possible in this life. Nor will these joys have any end, but they will be continuous and perpetual. This then is the sensible, external kingdom of God, and the same is lowest in glory. But this very thing is shown to a man in the way aforesaid, in order that he may long for it, and that he may perform his work excellently in gaining virtues.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Concerning the Natural Kingdom.

The kingdom of God is shown also in the second place to the lovers of God in the light of nature. For neither does grace repel the natural light, nor does glory, but enlightens it the more. For if the nature has not been overclouded by the shadows of vices, anyone may know naturally that both heaven and earth and whatsoever God has established for the honour of Himself and the uses of men have been created for this reason, that he may praise and serve God with and for all. For it is the praise and the service that is the hidden kingdom of God, which He shows in the light of nature, which they who are strangers to God know not, although they flourish in the light of nature. For such a one is able by a certain natural method, or naturally, to perceive and recognise the disposition or ordering of the soul's

powers, and of their own senses both outward and inward, and even of all creatures. And this is the natural kingdom of God; since God possesses all creatures as His own proper kingdom. And according to this method God's natural kingdom is shown to a man, which he is able to recognise even apart from the grace and praise of God. But those who are endowed with Divine love cannot behold and consider things established by God—or these things which we have mentioned, without the praise of God, and therefore they obtain their reward from all these things.

CHAPTER XL.

Concerning the Kingdom of Scripture.

In addition in the third place, the kingdom of God is shown to noble men in the Scriptures, that is in the sacred doctrines and institutions of Christ Jesus and His Saints, and in the same way in the examples which they have left to us for this reason, that thus we may seek these things, and that which they themselves have gained, seeing that we may merit to attain them. He to whom this kingdom of Scripture is shown by God understands the Scriptures well and clearly ; although it can easily be that he does not follow all their subtile meanings, which is not necessary. For those things which either lead away from God or lead up to God, he understands sufficiently ; and by this very thing he understands all truth, since all virtues and vices are included. For rightly he recognizes the voice of strangers who, although they

bear before them the appearance of shepherds are thieves and robbers. Of this kind are they who in expounding the Sacred Scriptures, follow a meaning different from and repugnant to the holy Fathers, and lead a life unlike theirs. All such lead men from the virtues, and search and look for temporal things rather than the salvation of men, and deservedly are to be counted rather amongst strangers than shepherds. Moreover this kingdom will be completed by God and by good men, that is, not one iota even in words, deeds and all the virtues will be omitted. Finally it is laid upon us to fulfil and carry out this very kingdom of Scripture, since that has flowed through our Lord Jesus Christ and His Saints from the Holy Spirit. And Scripture indeed shall perish sometime, but the fruit of Scripture shall last for ever. Those who are learned and discerning are indeed able plainly and clearly to explain the Divine Writings, both because they have their memory stored with them on account of the clearness of their intellect and genius, and because also of great practice in the schools, seeing that

they are experienced in divine charity and grace; but they are unable to taste the fruit and the sweetness concealed in them without divine love. Therefore this kingdom of Scripture is shown to the lovers of God for this reason, that they may live according to the same Scripture, and thus not only in the present but also in the future life they may be fitted to taste its fruit and sweetness. Now the virtues, inward consolation and the hope of eternal life, are this very kingdom of God which is hid in the Scriptures, but is shown to His lovers, nor can it be tasted by strangers and those outside without any love or knowledge of God, or discernment or subtilty.

CHAPTER XLI.

Of the Kingdom of Grace and Glory.

In the fourth place God shows His kingdom to distinguished men and His friends in the light of grace and glory, and this takes place beyond the senses, beyond the light of nature, and beyond all those things which can be learnt from the Scriptures; nevertheless it is not contrary to the Scriptures. For what good things and what joys God shows to his friends in this light, these neither can the Scripture so evidently express, nor anyone so perfectly deliver in writings to a living person, as are displayed by God to spirits burning with love. For that kingdom, which is manifested to His lovers, is the fruit and taste of all the virtues, which is the food of angels, of blessed spirits, and of good men. For there are many who rely upon acts of the virtues, but without virtue, that is, without divine charity, and therefore

least of all taste the fruits of virtues. There are others who cultivate and exercise acts of the virtues, and indeed are endowed with divine love; but because they are not sufficiently enlightened neither can they themselves taste the fruits of the virtues for this reason. But those who desire the kingdom to be shown to them, and long to taste its fruits,—these must needs have been established by God in the very core of the kingdom of their own soul, in the supreme height of their mind, that is, amid the super-essential, inherent, contemplative, and emanating active life. And now enough has been said of action and contemplation.

CHAPTER XLII.

Of the Six Fruits of Grace and of Glory, of which Three belong to the Active, Three to the Affective Life.

Let us now deal with a few fruits which are displayed in the light of grace and glory. For all external actions and exercises of virtue receive their end at some time; but their fruits will be our food and drink in eternal life. For the six fruits and the kinds of a sensible taste are shown in action to men of this kind, and, so far, the mind looks downward both in the light of grace and glory; however not all in grace or in glory taste or feel equally. The first fruit and the first taste, (which indeed are necessary to all who wish to be saved, although now they happily perceive or taste, however many spend a blessed life in Heaven with God), is the mind, compliant, obedient and submissive beneath the most high power of God.

And this submissive obedience towards the precepts and prohibitions of God as has been already said, is necessary to whomsoever desires to be saved. The second fruit is to feel oneself of goodwill towards all, and to be benevolent and generous to all, kind and well intentioned in judging, and patient and gentle in adverse matters. The third fruit is to perceive and know in oneself the beforementioned submissive and humble obedience, and in the same way, the benevolence and also the patient gentleness to be not other than one's own proper essence. And these are the fruits of the active life. Moreover the fourth fruit is a resolute, sensible love towards God, and this together with the soul and body and all their powers; the sensible disposition or desire whereby anyone strives with the very core of the soul, so that both itself and all creatures which a most beneficent God has established and ordered for His praise and honour may fulfil this very end outwardly and inwardly, and with its whole faculty may maintain and accomplish it; and if anywhere they may not fulfil it, or fall from thence, it brings

forth perpetual grief for that of which it can never be forgetful. The fifth fruit of the eternal kingdom is the sensible, impatient love which is moved or attained from above without intermission, and ever eagerly aspires and looks towards union with Him whom it loves, nor is ever able to cease from acts of virtues, seeing that this nobility of dignity is inborn in it. The sixth fruit of the same kingdom is the clear contemplation of all these fruits, and all the consideration of this perception or experience. Besides which, such a man contemplates the sensible kingdom, not only as it now is, but even as it will be endlessly, and in the same way his own natural kingdom, as God has created and adorned it both naturally and above nature, even as He will adorn the same in glory. He will behold also all blessed spirits of angels and men, as these flow and reflow in the praise of God. He gazes also upon the benevolence and generosity of God, since He is the chief cause of all virtues and of all perception and experience, and since He, the Same, flows forth together with Himself and all His gifts, which thing renders a man

impatient with love, whilst he seeks to obtain His likeness and vehemently to be united to Him in eternal fruition. And these are the fruits of the life which they call the affective.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Concerning the Kingdom of Divinity beyond the Light of Grace and Glory, and Concerning the Three-fold Fruit of the Superessential, Contemplative Life.

Then fifthly the kingdom of God beyond all created light is shown to His lovers in a certain boundless, divine light, and this beyond reason in the mind, is introverted into the superessential unity of God, when the three-fold fruit is given to a man, that is, Pure, Boundless Clearness, Incomprehensible Love, and Divine Fruition. Of which the first fruit, that is Boundless Clearness, is the cause of all clarity which is contained in contemplation and in action. And this so sweetly affects the intellect, that immersing itself essentially in that very thing it may be rendered one with it.

Moreover another fruit, that is to say,

Incomprehensible Love, flows throughout the whole kingdom of the soul, accordingly as it is capable of its own certain kind of power, and it causes the soul to melt into simple and essential clarity. Further, while this Boundless Clearness and Incomprehensible Love, flow through and penetrate the soul, the soul itself now attains to Fruition, which is the third fruit. Moreover this Fruition is so great and so immense, that both God Himself, the Saints, and all the blessed and those lofty amongst men, are absorbed in it, and immersed in a certain boundless thing, that is, in a kind of ignorance and continual losing of the self. In which nevertheless the chief and highest taste consists in the losing of the self by immersion. Now whosoever is of this nature, will himself be ideal, and henceforth he will possess his own mind as a king his kingdom, so that the mind itself continually turns and projects itself downwards to the carrying out of all virtues, and thus bears the perfect likeness of the fertile unity of God, which according to the Persons, together with all their gifts, continually flows forth for the necessity of all creatures. And

in the same way, in accordance with its own selfsame mind, it will cleave essentially to God, so that it may be transformed into the inexhaustible and infinite Clearness in the same way also as the divine Persons Who are absorbed and immersed by all impulses into the abyss of the divine essence, and are inundated by Fruition, yet nevertheless, according to the personal distinction in that self-same fertile nature, continually flow forth and work. Thus doubtless, even that ideal man, in the supreme height of his mind, stands between his essence and his powers, that is, between fruition and action, always by the cleaving of himself essentially to God in fruition by defluxion and absorption, and into the darkness of divinity by immersion, which darkness both of God and of all blessed spirits is the supreme blessedness. And thus he will be transformed from clearness to clearness, that is from the created clearness into the uncreated clarity, and this by means of the eternal type which is the Wisdom of God the Father Who is the type of all creatures, whereby all things both corporal and spiritual live. And by the self-same type all

creatures flow forth to exist in the created likeness of God, and they receive it. But distinguished and ideal men of this kind are most of all like God, whenever they flow forth outwardly with all virtues, just as does God also with all His gifts, and they remain inwardly in endless fruition, and beyond all gifts are one with God. As many as are of this kind are most clearly and very excellently illuminated and ideal. Which in order that all we too without any failure may attain, may the ever most blessed and adorable Trinity One God grant. Amen.

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